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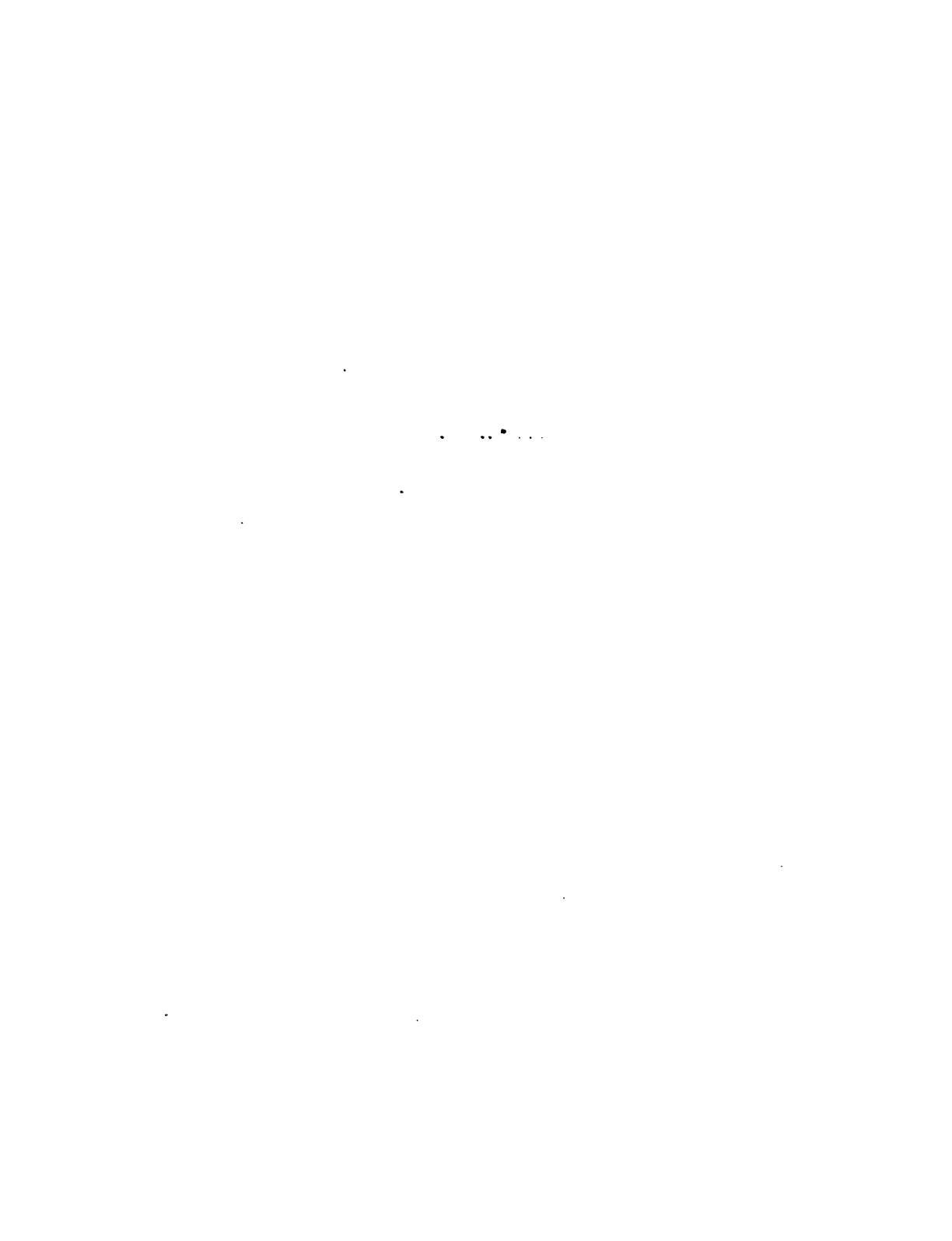
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THE
PROPHESYING OF WOMEN

A
POPULAR AND PRACTICAL
EXPOSITION OF THE BIBLE DOCTRINE

BY
REV. G. F. WILKIN.

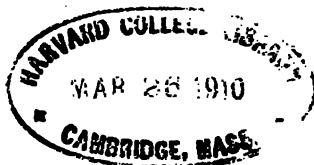
“The daughters shall prophesy” (Joel ii: 28).

“Let the women keep silence in the churches” (I Cor., xiv: 34).

FLEMING H. REVELL COMPANY,
CHICAGO. NEW YORK. TORONTO.
Publishers of Evangelical Literature.

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J. C. W. H. C.

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To my Wife

THIS VOLUME IS AFFECTIONATELY DEDICATED

AS A TESTIMONY

TO THE

REVERENT LOYALTY TO GOD'S WORD

WITH WHICH SHE EVER SEEKS TO EMPLOY HER EMINENT

PROPHETIC AND TEACHING GIFTS.

**"Her husband * * * praiseth her, saying, Many daughters
have done virtuously, but thou excellest them all" (Prov., xxxi:
28, 29).**

THE AUTHOR.

PREFACE.

Our *aim* in the preparation of this little volume is twofold:—First to present in popular form an outline exposition of the doctrine of Scripture as to women's prophesying; and, secondly, to show the practical adaptations and value of the doctrine. But we discuss the Bible doctrine from the point of view, not of the essayist, or of the theologian, or of the disinterested scientific inquirer, but of the Christian minister, whose business is to induce all mankind to accept the teachings of God in Holy Writ as the supreme law of their lives. To this extent we speak as an advocate. But advocacy supposes something to advocate; and in establishing the doctrine for which we stand we trust that our methods are critical and scientific, and that the most careful students of Scripture will find no just grounds for censure either in our conclusions or in the ways by which we have reached them.

The Christian minister, however, is engaged in a hand to hand grapple with evil of every description, entrenched behind bulwarks of every sort. And as sin is itself essential unreason and defiance of

authority; so we find it necessary, in dealing with popular error, to notice even the most absurd misconceptions and prejudices that may serve to enable it to maintain its hold upon the popular mind, and to ply the sword of the Spirit against them in manifold ways. This may serve to explain some things we have said that might else have seemed to be out of place in a discussion like this. And especially may it relieve us at some points from the suspicion of uncharity which might arise in connection with some parts of the practical portion of our work, but which assuredly is far from our thoughts and from our hearts.

We have made use of the Revised Version in all Scripture quotations.





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THE PROPHESYING OF WOMEN

CHAPTER I.

INTRODUCTORY.

In a time like this, when the relations of women to the world's work are claiming the world's attention, and when the battle waxes hot about the standards of "reform," "progress," "equal rights," it is fitting that we turn aside for a little to commune with Him whose word is the end of all strife; fitting that we turn away from the uncertainties of human speculation to the Rock of divine truth—that anchoring ground of human faith which has been settled forever in heaven.

We do not, however, undertake an inquiry into all the many phases of the "woman question" that claim attention in this closing decade of the nineteenth century. Our purpose does not directly concern any one of the various educational, industrial, or political questions of the day; and of the relations of women to the church, to Christian work, and to the religious life of the community, we shall speak incidentally and only so far as may be necessary for the practical elucidation of the rights and duties of women as to speaking in public assemblies.

We are fortunate in our theme. Embracing but

a single aspect of the subject of "woman's rights," it is one upon which the Scriptures speak directly and with great distinctness. Narrowness is itself an advantage as favoring simplicity of treatment and clearness of thought. But narrowness is by no means synonymous with insignificance; and we shall find as we advance that the Scripture doctrine as to women's prophesying lies very near to many fundamental truths, and throws a flood of unexpected light upon some practical problems of great importance. Indeed, it is one of those germinal doctrines in which Christianity abounds—one of those mustard seeds of divine thought whose bare simplicity gives to the superficial observer no suggestion of the tremendous potentiality inclosed within.

The *occasion* giving rise to a necessity for lengthened discussion of so simple a doctrine is *twofold*. It consists, first, in an apparent discrepancy in the statements of Scripture, certain texts seeming to be prohibitive of that which others permit; and, secondly, in a division and difference in the opinions and practices of Christians corresponding to the two classes of texts. The old and conservative view, or that which favors silence, is backed by a greater array of critical scholarship. But there is a very strong and growing popular conviction favorable to the opposite opinion—that the Word of God gives women a right to speak in public.

The great *need* of both parties is a full-orbed Bible doctrine. Both, with an almost equal show of

reason, claim to represent the teachings of God's Word; and both alike proclaim what is but a segment of truth, minimizing or disregarding to some extent the opposite segment. There is, accordingly, manifest with both an uneasy consciousness of incompleteness, and a lurking skepticism as to the possibility of formulating a complete and balanced doctrine. There is an evident gap between the church's apprehension of Scripture and its own practical needs, with the result that one party, seeking to enlarge the sphere of woman's usefulness, pursues its aggressive way under the standard of "progress," without paying too much heed to difficulties of interpretation; while the other party, standing fast by the "law and the testimony," as the only safe and truly expedient course, yet finds itself worsted in the conflict and gradually losing ground before the onrush of a hostile public sentiment. The fault on both sides is the same. It is an imperfect apprehension of a perfect doctrine, with a controlling conviction that the perfect is unattainable.

We believe that this is a mistake; that the deliverances of God's Word on this subject do not belong to the category of insoluble problems, or to those mysteries of apparent contradiction springing out of the infinity of God; and that a true reverence, looking to the Scriptures as to the infallible utterances of the All-wise, and applying to the interpretation a rigorously exacting rational method,

will certainly resolve all discrepancies and give to every utterance of inspiration its place in a doctrine that shall be, not only perfect and complete, but also transparently simple and obvious. It is our hope that the following chapters will vindicate this opinion and present the leading lineaments of such a doctrine.

Two classes of texts demand attention: namely, those primarily designed and adapted to give light on the subject, and those touching incidentally upon it. The secondary evidence is necessarily inferential and of doubtful value save as it lends confirmation to that which is more direct and positive. The primary evidence, which will constitute the burden of our argument, is to be found in five texts, as follows:—Joel, ii: 28, 29; Acts, ii: 1-18; I Cor., xi: 3-16; xiv: 33-38; I Tim., ii: 8-14. These passages will be discussed in this order, which is the historical order, and, as we shall see, the true logical order.

The *doctrine* we propound is, that women have, in general, a right to prophesy, or to speak in public assemblies—a right equal to man's, but distinctive and different from man's as womanhood differs from manhood. This doctrine will be developed as follows:—The right to prophesy is first *declared* (Joel); then *illustrated* (Acts); and then, in turn, *qualified* (I Cor., xi) and *defined*, or limited (I Cor., xiv); after which the *restriction is generalized* (I Tim.). The chapters that follow will show the effect of this doctrine upon *woman's sphere*, and the practical *consequences of disregarding it*.

CHAPTER II.

THE RIGHT DECLARED.

Joel ii: 28, 29—" (28) And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions: (29) and also upon the servants and upon the handmaids in those days will I pour out my Spirit."

This text is the charter of woman's right to speak in public assemblies; the doctrinal source and guaranty of her long unused, long contested, prerogative. We shall notice the *nature*, *permanence*, and *significance* of the blessing conveyed by this remarkable prediction.

I.—Nature of the Right.

It is summed up in a single word—the "daughters shall prophesy." The meaning of this prediction depends upon the meaning of the word prophesy. This we may discover by a reference to the Hebrew words so translated; to the usage of the Old Testament; and to the inspired commentary to be found in the corresponding Greek term, and in New Testament usage.

1. Three *Hebrew words* are translated prophet—נָבִיא *nabhi*, רוֹאֶה *roeh*, and חֹזֶה *chozeh*. According to the lexicographers Gesenius and Fuerst,

nabhi means one who speaks under a divine impulse, or under inspiration—"one inspired or moved to communicate the mind of God." *Roeh* and *chozeh* both signify one who sees, or *seer*. These terms, however, are very rarely found, the former being used chiefly of Samuel, the latter in poetry. We refer to them for the light they throw upon the meaning of prophesy.

We have, then, in Hebrew, three terms and two distinct conceptions corresponding to the English word prophet. Which of these two conceptions may be said to be fundamental? Substantially, of course, they are identical. Both refer to one through whom God speaks to men. But *nabhi* mentions him as inspired; the other two words conceive of him as having seen something. God sometimes spoke directly to the mind of the prophet, exercising a supernatural control over his faculties. At other times there were visions and dreams—appearances presented to the waking or sleeping senses. Is prophecy, therefore, fundamentally inspiration, or seeing? We answer, It is neither. Inspiration and seeing are mere incidents of prophecy. There is a prophesying without either. And the Hebrew language has no word whose root meaning is the essential idea of prophesying.

This was, perhaps, to have been expected. Hebrew is a language that has never lost sight of its material origin. The development of language, like that of an individual's vocabulary, is from simpler

and more material conceptions to those that are more general, more complex, and more philosophical. In the beginning, in childhood, objects will be denominated, not by their most important characteristics, but by some conspicuous physical property—something that catches the eye or the ear. Afterward, when in process of time the child has grown up and become familiar with the essential nature of the object, the name will come to represent that nature in its entirety, and will cease to be thought of in its original signification. So with us the words moon, youth, river have a definite meaning; but to most of us the origin of these words is not known and must be sought from a dictionary. English words have often to be traced through quite a history of changes in form and meaning, and even through several languages, back to their starting point. But in Hebrew this history is generally short and obvious. Words have not lost sight of their physical origin. So *lebhana* is the *white* one, or moon; *naar*, the one with a *harsh voice*, or youth, referring to the change of voice; *yeohr*, that which *gleams* or *flashes*, the river. But whiteness, harshness of voice, and flashing are not essential characteristics of the objects to which they gave names. They are merely striking physical properties that caught the eye or ear of the earliest simple-minded observers. And just so inspiration and vision seeing are not essential characteristics of prophecy, though they have given us its three Hebrew names. They

are merely non-essential incidents. The names they have given us undoubtedly meant when in use all that we mean when we speak of Old Testament prophecy; but the etymological root meaning of the names is not the fundamental idea of prophecy.

2. The *fundamental idea of prophecy* is the delivery of a message from God to men. God spake of old time unto the fathers by the prophets. In his sovereign pleasure not choosing to speak his will directly to every human mind, God selects a man or men to *speak for* him; and the man who thus speaks God's will in God's stead is a prophet. As Peter says (II Pet., i: 21), "No prophecy ever came by the will of man; but men spake from God, being moved by the Holy Ghost." False prophets are described (Jer., xxiii: 16) as those who "speak a vision of their own heart, and not out of the mouth of the Lord."

Smith's Bible Dictionary (Art. Prophet, p. 2597) says, "The prophet held an intermediate position in communication between God and man. God communicated with him by his Spirit, and he, having received the communication, was the 'spokesman' of God to man."

Fairbairn (Prophecy, p. 19) says, "The prophet * * * was simply the recipient and bearer of a message from God; and such a message of course was a prophecy, whatever might be its more specific character—whether the disclosure of some important truth, the inculcation of an imperative duty, or a prospective delineation of coming events."

The *method* in which God communicated with the mind of the prophet is *immaterial*. Oftentimes it is not stated. And it is of no consequence that we should know the how, provided only the fact and the subject-matter are duly attested. We read that there were "various manners" (Heb., i: 1).

Thus *Moses* was a prophet (Hos., xii: 13), but the method by which God communicated with him was peculiar. When Aaron and Miriam had revolted against Moses, God "spake suddenly" to them. "And he said * * * If there be a prophet among you, I the Lord will make myself known unto him in a vision, I will speak with him in a dream. My servant Moses is not so; he is faithful in all mine house: with him will I speak mouth to mouth, even manifestly, and not in dark speeches" (Numb., xii: 6-8). "And the Lord spake unto Moses face to face, as a man speaketh unto his friend" (Ex., xxxiii: 11). Moses was not an ordinary prophet. There was no inspiration and no vision seeing, but conversation instead, Moses' intellectual powers operating in the normal and usual manner, and the audible voice of Jehovah being the vehicle of the message and the pledge of its inerrancy. *Fairbairn* says of Moses (Prophecy, p. 21; see also p. 27), "Not only was he a prophet in the strictest sense, but also in the highest degree." It is written (Deut., xxxiv: 10), "There hath not arisen a prophet since in Israel like unto Moses, whom the Lord knew face to face."

Our Savior was a prophet—the Prophet—but we find him illustrating still another variation in the method of the divine communication. God said to Moses (Deut., xviii: 18), “I will raise them up a prophet from among their brethren, like unto thee; and I will put my words in his mouth, and he shall speak unto them all that I shall command him.” As though to remind us of this promise, and to announce himself as the prophet that should come, Jesus declares his mission as follows:—“I have given them thy word” (Jn., xvii: 14); “I spake not from myself; but the Father which sent me, he hath given me a commandment, what I should say, and what I should speak” (xii: 49); “All things that I *heard from my Father* I have made known unto you” (xv: 15). Christ could be regarded as a prophet “like unto” Moses only as he “received his revelations like Moses” (Fairbairn, Appendix B, p. 486, and p. 31), by face to face communion with God. But there was a difference. Christ “heard” his message “in the beginning” when he was “with God”—in the eternal counsels of the divine Three in One.

The *apostles* were prophets, and they received their message by personal intercourse with Christ (Jn., xiv: 26).

Speaking what God commands, or being a “mouth” (Jer., xv: 19) to God, is the essence of prophecy; but the manner in which the divine command is made known to the prophet is immaterial.

A remarkable *illustration of the essential nature of prophecy* occurs in God's address to Moses when sending him to Pharoah:—"See, I have made thee a god to Pharoah: and Aaron thy brother shall be thy prophet" (Ex., vii: 1). Also again when God was sending Moses to his Hebrew brethren:—"And Aaron shall be thy spokesman unto the people: and it shall come to pass that he shall be to thee a mouth, and thou shalt be to him as God" (iv: 16). That is, of course, not that Aaron should in any sense regard and treat his brother as divine. He would simply, by virtue of his readiness of speech, utter *for* Moses the messages Moses lacked fluency to express for himself. This language involves no mere figure of speech. Speaking for another is being the other's prophet, whether he be God or man. Speaking for God is Christian prophesying (See Gesenius' Hebrew Lexicon on *Nabhi*).

3. The Scriptures distinctly recognize *two main classes of prophets*—those who speak for God by way of the *revelation* of religious truth not previously known, or not known as a part of the divine system; and those who speak for God in the *promulgation* or proclamation of truths not received direct from God, but which had previously been revealed to others and perhaps committed to writing as we have it in the Bible. There are the prophets of a revelation *proceeding*, and the prophets of a revelation already *completed*; the prophets miracu-

lously attested and guarded from error in uttering and recording the truths of Holy Writ, and the prophets, commissioned and illuminated by God, but not as a rule attested by miracle or infallible in their utterances, who receive those truths at second hand and pass them along to others. They are the prophets *originating the Canon* of Scripture, and those who *derive their message from the Canon* or from its inspired authors. We may designate these two classes of prophets as prophets of the Canon, or *canonical* prophets; and as logically subsequent to the Canon, or *post-canonical*.

The authors of our sacred writings, or the canonical prophets, are not clearly distinguished from the post-canonical otherwise than by the difference between the inspired authorship of Bible doctrine and the uninspired proclamation of it. But in this they are sharply distinguished. God, having made revelation of his truth to one of his servants, and having inspired that one to write the message down in a book, does not in general make new revelations of the same truths to others independently of the book. It is given and certified to the whole world once for all in writing; and after it has been thus officially recorded the world must seek it in the book, and find it there or not at all. God does not needlessly repeat himself. There is economy and unity in all God's works. The history of redemption is one; the gospel is one; the Bible is one; and the revelation and inspiration, through which the

Bible came to us to be our authoritative rule of faith and practice, were given once and never repeated.

And when the Canon was completed, and in Old Testament times, in just so far as it was completed, those to whom it was given were divinely commissioned to transmit its message to others. And the Holy Spirit was "poured out" upon them in such measure as they were able to receive it, to enlighten their minds; to "bring to remembrance" the truths to be proclaimed; and to give "power" in the proclamation. Not inspired to write, but to herald abroad truths already recorded by inspiration, they might or might not be infallible as teachers, and might or might not be attested by miracles. Elijah (I Kings, xvii: 1 ff) and Elisha (I Kings, xix: 16 ff) were preachers of righteousness, clothed with divine power and authority; but they do not appear as the authors of any portion of Holy Writ. We read that John the Baptist, coming as Elijah and in his spirit, "*restoreth* all things" (Matt., xvii: 11), and "turns the heart of the fathers to the children, and the disobedient to walk in the wisdom of the just" (Lk., i: 17). The mission of these prophets was, not to reveal new truth, but to turn the people back from sin to the Law which they had forsaken (I K., xviii: 18-37), or to give the knowledge of God to the heathen (II K., v: 8, 15), as he was already known in Israel. They were preachers, but not revealers, of truth. They were prophets of the post-canonical class.

The "Schools of the Prophets" furnish the most remarkable Old Testament illustration of the second or post-canonical class of prophets. In these schools "the more select portion of the Levitical and priestly classes" (Fairbairn, p. 37), from a spiritual point of view, were gathered under the leadership of some great prophet to engage in the study of the Mosaic law, Jewish history, psalmody, etc. *Stanley* says these were the "first societies ever formed for the purpose of instruction and education" (Jewish Church, p. 442). They are described as "associations formed for the purpose of mental and spiritual training, that they might exert a more powerful influence upon their contemporaries, * * * check the decline of religious life in the nation, and bring back the rebellious to 'the law and the testimony'" (Keil and Delitzsch, Com. on I Sam., xix: 18-24).

These men, "sons" or "scholars" of the prophets, were thus trained to become preachers of the Law precisely as students of theology are trained now. "We must not, however, conclude," says *Ellicott* (Com. for Eng. Readers, Excursus H at close of I Sam.), "that all, or that even a large proportion of the people trained in these schools of Samuel, were prophets in the sense of being able to make predictions, or even to write or speak as inspired men." They "were commonly employed in holding meetings for devotional exercises and spiritual instruction, in the hope of thereby rekind-

ling the flame of piety, and diffusing the fear of God throughout the land" (Fairbairn, p. 37). They are sometimes called prophets (I Sam., x: 5, on which see note in Annotated Paragraph Bible; xix: 20; II K., ix: 1, 4), and at times many of them were miraculously endowed (I K., xx: 35); but the evidence is that generally they were subject to the ordinary limitations of human knowledge and action (II K., iv: 38-41; vi: 5).

Although there is no mention of these "seminaries" after Samuel's time for about two hundred years, or till the days of Elijah and Elisha (B. C. 900), they were quite numerous then, and "we may fairly assume," says *Ellicott* (as above), that the new impulse given to religious education by Samuel was never suffered to die out, and that from his days onward the schools of the prophets flourished among the chosen people." As to the influence of these schools, *Ewald* (History of Israel, Vol. 2, p. 425) writes, "Through such a diffusion of prophetic training, the higher truths of prophecy must have been most rapidly diffused among the people. * * * A new power, and that the most spiritual possible, was thenceforward established among the people; a power which beyond all others was the moving-spring of the succeeding centuries, and produced whatever greatness they were capable of."

Such was prophecy among the Jews:—First, a miraculous gift by which men were enabled infal-

libly to know, proclaim, and record in permanent shape, the truths which constitute the Old Testament Scriptures; and, secondly, a preaching gift, which, if miraculous at all as to the truths proclaimed, was simply a miracle of reminder and not of revelation, and which ordinarily pursued natural methods in the acquisition and promulgation of truth; but which was then, as it is always, characterized by the illumination of the Spirit, filling, inspiring, and helping those who by study and training seek to qualify themselves for the dissemination of the revealed doctrines of Grace. In those days, the preaching of the Word, and the preachers themselves, were often attested by miracles of power or of knowledge. But these are of the nature of "signs," and even the latter are not to be confounded with the revelations of truth that constitute the burden of inspired prophecy.

Such was prophecy in Joel's time, perhaps one hundred years after Elisha's death. And unless a great change had taken place in the schools of the prophets during that interval, which is not probable (see Ewald as above), the prophesying of Joel's day was chiefly of the non-miraculous, or post-canonical, type. Joel was one of the very first of the inspired prophets of later Jewish history, Jonah and Hosea only being supposed to be as early. The day of new prophetic light had not yet dawned. It was just beginning to break.

There is, therefore, no *historical presumption*

that the prophesying of the "daughters" and "handmaids" foretold by Joel should be exclusively miraculous. Not only is it true that no woman ever was classed among the canonical prophets, as one of the inspired authors of Scripture, and that such a thing is, therefore, not predicted; but the post-canonical prophets of Joel's day were presumably as a rule not miraculously endowed. And the presumption is that the thought providentially uppermost and controlling in Joel's mind as he foretold the prophesying of women, was of the post-canonical, non-miraculous, natural type of prophecy—that he predicted that women should "speak for God to men" in the normal exercise of their ordinary mental and spiritual endowments.

4. *Prophecy in the New Testament* appears under very much the same aspects as among the Jews. The Greek term employed in the Septuagint as the translation of *nabhi*, and used for *prophet* in the New Testament, is προφήτης *prophetes*, meaning one who "speaks for" God (πρό, for, and φημι, to speak), this being the essential idea of prophecy. Liddell and Scott's Greek Lexicon defines the word as signifying "one who speaks for another, especially one who speaks for a god, and interprets his will to men, a prophet."

But a glance at the New Testament suffices to show that, while the idea of prophecy is unchanged, and while the two classes of prophets are still conspicuously represented, the class corresponding to

the canonical prophets of the Old Testament has received a new name. It is no longer prophets, but *apostles*, who are the great interpreters of God to men, the authors of inspired books, the infallible and miracle-working guides of God's chosen people. This class included some, however, who were not of the Twelve, as the authors of Mark, Luke, and The Acts, besides the great Apostle to the Gentiles. The *prophets* of the New Testament were an order of men of inferior gifts and authority. It was, "first, apostles, secondly, prophets." (I Cor., xii: 28; Eph., iv: 11.)

The parallel between the greater prophets of the new dispensation (the apostles) and the authors of the Old Testament is obvious. Both received their message direct from God—the Twelve by three years of intimate, personal intercourse with Christ; Paul by revelation (Gal., i: 1, 12, 16, 17)—and both claimed to speak for God with authority (Is., i: 10-24; iii: 16; I Cor., xiv: 37; II Thes., iii: 6, 12, 14; etc.). The apostles, though not always infallible in action (Gal., ii: 11, 14), or always from the first fully informed as to the scope and bearings of their doctrines (Acts, ii: 39; x: 14, 34, 35), were, like Isaiah and Jeremiah, infallible as the "mouths" of God in the utterance of spiritual truth, and were always kept from error in the actual direction of the opinions and practices of the church. Not always knowing all things, as our Lord himself in his humiliation did not (Matt., xxiv: 36); when the time

came for them to know and to teach a new aspect of divine truth, they were taught of God to speak aright, and they spoke with all assurance and authority.

The *prophets*, to whom God has seen fit to appropriate the name in the New Testament, were a different class of men. They had not, like the Twelve, been for years in daily communion with the God-man; or, like Paul, received their knowledge of the gospel by revelation from above. Some of them, indeed, may have belonged to the number of those who " companied with " the apostles " *all the time* that the Lord Jesus went in and went out among " them, " beginning from the baptism of John, unto the day that he was received up." But they could not catch the full light of that perfect doctrine, much of which was hidden from all save the apostles (Matt., xvii: 1-13; ch's. xxiv and xxv; Jn., ch's. xiv-xvii). Undoubtedly they were taught by the apostles, who stood between the Savior and all other men as the chief recipients and expounders of the gospel.

The prophets of the New Testament differed from the apostles, as the men trained in the schools of the prophets differed from the inspired authors of the books of the Old Testament.

(1) The *message* they had to deliver was *received* by them, *not directly from God*, but indirectly through the apostles or through the Old Testament.

The gospel message was fully made known directly to none but the apostles; and it was virtually complete when Jesus ascended (Acts, i: 9), and when the little company in the upper chamber (Acts, i: 13, 14), were waiting for the promise of the Father—the descent of the Holy Spirit. And the Spirit was promised, not to reveal new truth, but to remind the disciples of all that Jesus *had* taught (Jn., xiv: 26). Jesus had said to the Twelve, “*All things that I heard from my Father I have made known unto you*” (Jn., xv: 15).

The time would come, to be sure, when a new apostle must see for himself the mysteries of God; and when the veil should be withdrawn from the future, and a glorious vision of promise revealed, for the comforting of the afflicted saints, in the Apocalypse. And God often interposed miraculously for the direction and protection of his church (Acts, xiii, 2; xvi: 6–10, 26, etc.). But the doctrine of salvation was complete. “Jesus and the resurrection” was the story that only needed the baptism from above to make it the power of God unto salvation to perishing men. Nothing was ever added to that story by revelation or otherwise. Even on the day of Pentecost the Spirit “gave utterance” to the disciples only concerning the “mighty works of God” (Acts, ii: 11) that had been. The apostles themselves do not seem to have received any new revelation on that day. They proclaimed a gospel already completed, which

thenceforward was to be the sole burden of all preaching, the basis of the religious life of all the churches. Some new practical questions were answered from time to time, it is true; some new and unwonted applications of the gospel were made; but the apostles could and did confidently affirm that their preaching was the gospel, and the whole gospel, and that no additions were ever to be made to it (Gal., i: 8, 9).

The "revelations" made to the prophets of the New Testament church (I Cor., xiv: 6, 26) could not be other than the unfolding of views *new to them* of the doctrines they had heard before from the apostles, or read in the Old Testament, and upon which they had already built their faith; or the revelation of facts of God's providence not vitally related to gospel truth. It is not God's economy to reveal anew miraculously that which he has once effectually revealed and made practically available by a reasonable use of natural means in the Word. Accordingly, the "revelations" made to New Testament prophets have not left the church the richer in its knowledge of God or of religion. No new truth is traceable to them.

(2) The prophets of the New Testament churches differed from the apostles in being *fallible as religious teachers*. They were liable to err in their apprehension and statement of the doctrines and precepts of Christianity.

The two epistles to the Corinthians owed their

origin largely to the errors, false teaching, and pertinacious opposition of some of the leading men in that church (II Cor., x: 1-13), who not only led the church astray from the truth in various respects, but even laid claim to apostolic authority, and challenged the teachings and authority of Paul himself (II Cor., xi: 3, 4, 12, 13; Godet, *Studies on the Epistles*, Ch's. III and IV, especially pages 97, 107, 126, 127). The active mischief-making of these men is apparent from several intimations in the first epistle (iv: 18, 19; xi: 16; xiv: 36-38). In this last reference Paul says, "If any man thinketh himself to be a *prophet*, or spiritual, let him take knowledge of the things which I write unto you, that they are the commandment of the Lord" (vs. 37). The disturbers claimed to be prophets, and Paul says the claim will be justified if they receive his statements as having divine authority.* The Corinthian leaders seem to have thought that the mantle of the great prophets of the old dispensation had fallen upon them; and Paul tells them they are but successors of the "sons," or "scholars," of the prophets. They were mistaken in their own endowments and authority.

All the Corinthian prophets seem to have been more or less at fault. Apparently they had fallen

* The essential distinction between apostles—the authoritative and infallible exponents of divine doctrine—and New Testament prophets—the fallible teachers of a doctrine received from God through the apostles—is here distinctly announced.

into the error, common to mystical enthusiasts, of supposing the inner spiritual impulse to be overwhelming and uncontrollable. They had turned the meetings into confusion, all talking at once; and Paul tells them they can and should control themselves and speak one at a time (I Cor., xiv: 29-33). They had also, it seems, laid too much stress upon the gift of tongues; and Paul bids them prefer prophecy, or speaking in the vernacular (vs. 27, 28, 39), as being more instructive and edifying (vs. 12, 26). They were probably endowed with considerable executive and oratorical ability; but, like almost all men of little culture and experience, when suddenly raised to prominent position, they lost their balance and fell into many foolish errors. They were prophets; and the prophets of the New Testament churches were not infallible.

(3) *Prophecy* in New Testament times was a gift to be *acquired and cultivated*.

The Corinthians were repeatedly exhorted to "desire earnestly" to prophesy (I Cor., xiv: 1, 39). But why desire, if it avails nothing? This entire chapter is an exhortation to *prefer* prophecy, the truth-proclaiming gift, to speaking with "tongues," which was in some respects more striking and impressive, but not profitable to the congregation. Why prefer, if the prophet necessarily waits passive upon the inscrutable pleasure of God for the message he is to deliver? Paul exhorts to *seek to abound* in that which edifies, namely, prophecy (vs.

12, 26). But why seek, if seeking hold no open gateway to fruition? The idea of the chapter is, that the ability to "speak for" God may be cultivated.

And we know that the Holy Spirit is freely given to all disciples of the Lord; that every person who has found life in Christ has some real knowledge of divine things to which he can testify; that practice and study will add to his knowledge and to his ability to declare it; and that every Christian has a standing commission, as good as any that prophet ever had, to sound abroad to others all he knows of Christ and his great salvation (Matt., xxviii: 19, 20; Rev., xxii: 17). It is true there was in the first churches an order of men who might correctly be defined as "supernaturally illuminated expounders and preachers" (Smith's Bible Dict., p. 2602)—a prophet class; but it is also certain that all the essential elements of prophecy are within the reach of every Christian who has a normal use of his mind and tongue; certain that any disciple may cultivate the gift, as it was cultivated in the Old Testament "schools of the prophets," and as it is cultivated now in theological seminaries, in training schools for Christian workers, and in all social-religious meetings. Some are prophets, but all may and can prophesy. Some are preachers, but all can "speak for" Christ.

The prophesying of the churches founded by the apostles differs thus from that of the inspired au-

thors of the sacred books in at least three respects:—First, the subject-matter of discourse was received from God, not by direct revelation, but indirectly, through the oral expositions of gospel truth by the apostles, or through the reading and study of the Old Testament; secondly, the prophets were fallible in teaching and action. They needed and received apostolic instruction and reproof; thirdly, the gift might be acquired and cultivated, whereas those to whom God spoke directly could only hearken and obey.

Such prophesying may fitly be characterized as *natural*. For, while it always has an active divine element, and while there could not be any prophesying but through the illuminating and quickening influences of the Holy Spirit; it is also true that the divine element is conditioned upon a human element—upon man's use of the appropriate means, by which God has ordained that we shall ordinarily acquire and make use of knowledge. All human efficiency comes from the sustaining and vitalizing help of God. We live, and move, and have our being in Him (Acts, xvii: 28), and apart from him we can do nothing (Jn., xv: 5). But, on the other hand, it is those who sow and reap that gather in the harvests, both material and spiritual; it is those who cultivate their own natural powers and improve upon their own religious attainments, that are made the recipients of the "gifts" of the Spirit. All post-canonical, or post-apostolic, proph-

ecy is subject to this law. God no longer speaks to his prophets by immediate and miraculous revelations of truth; but mediately, through the Word and through the normal operation of the free human intelligence.

The descent of prophecy from a miraculous to a natural plane is in strict accordance with the usual methods of divine working. God is chary of the miraculous. He prefers to exalt the nature he has created, and to work through second causes. Accordingly, the miracle of creation was succeeded by the evolutions of preservation and providence along the lines of natural law; and the working out of the plan of human redemption, by the miracle of God's self-revelation and incarnation, was followed by the gathering of a church of redeemed men and women, through the preaching and exemplification of the gospel by those who have experienced its blessings. We might, therefore, have anticipated that prophecy also, after having accomplished its creative work in the establishment of an authoritative Canon of divine teaching and in certifying the same to men, would lay aside its miraculous character and descend to the level of a natural proclaiming or preaching gift, taking on thus an adaptation for the permanent and universal dissemination of the words of truth which the miraculous gift had conferred on mankind.

II.—Permanence and Universality of the Right.

That the prophetic gift was designed to be and is permanently present in the church appears from

1. The *scriptural intimations as to the time of the fulfillment of Joel's prediction.*

Joel says, "It shall come to pass *afterward*"—an indefinite expression, which in itself might designate any point or period of time subsequent to the events predicted in the antecedent portions of the prophecy. But Peter, speaking under inspiration and interpreting while freely quoting this passage (Acts, ii: 16–18), uses an equivalent expression that gives it an unmistakable definiteness of meaning. He says, "It shall be in the *last days*." This phrase, often in the comparative form (latter days), while sometimes having a more restricted sense (Gen., xlix, 1; Jer., xxiii: 20), generally "signifies the last dispensation, the times of the Messiah."

Balaam's prediction concerning the relations of Israel and Moab "in the latter days," though literally fulfilled in David's reign, is couched in terms more appropriate to Israel's greater King. His is the "Star" that shall come forth out of Jacob; the "Scepter" that shall rise out of Israel (Numb., xxiv: 14, 17).

Daniel's use of these words (Dan., ii: 28) is plain, when he speaks of a "stone cut out without hands," which "became a great mountain and filled the whole earth" (vs. 35); since he explains it as refer-

ring to the "kingdom" which the God of heaven shall set up, that shall consume all kingdoms and "stand forever" (vs. 44).

Isaiah also is unequivocal when he predicts (Is., ii: 2-4), "It shall come to pass in the latter days, that the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills, and all nations shall flow unto it. * * * They shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning-hooks: nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more." "And the idols shall utterly pass away" (vs. 18).

Micah (iv: 1-8), using the same indication of time, and uttering a prophecy almost identical with Isaiah's, adds, "They shall sit every man under his vine and under his fig tree; and none shall make them afraid. * * * and the Lord shall reign over them in mount Zion from henceforth even for ever."

The fulfillment of these glorious predictions is of course to be found in the establishment, progress and ultimate triumph of Christianity. The gathering together of "all nations" to the peaceful reign of Israel's king in Mount Zion, is the coming of the peoples to Christ, the Savior and King of God's elect, who are the true Israel (Rom., ii: 28, 29); and the center of its worship and glory is the heavenly Jerusalem (Gal., iv: 26), the spiritual Mount Zion (Heb., xii: 22). The last stage of the setting up of

Messiah's kingdom began in the outpouring of the Spirit on the day of Pentecost; the final consummation will be reached in the coming of the great day of the Lord—the end of the present dispensation. Some of the blessings promised have not yet been realized. The world-wide triumph and glory; the disappearance of idolatry; the universal reign of peace—are still but a promise of the distant future. We are still far from the time when " the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea " (Is., xi: 9); far from the crowning blessing of the " last days."

Commentators generally take the view we have stated as to the meaning of these words.

" The expression, the *last days*," says *Schaff* (Popular Com., Acts, ii: 17), " was used by the Rabbis for that period of time which extends from the coming of the Messiah to the end of the world."

Hackett (Com. on Acts, ii: 17) states that " Peter's expression denotes always in the New Testament the age of the Messiah, which the Scriptures represent as the world's last great moral epoch." The prediction, he continues (vs. 18), " portrays in reality the character of the entire dispensation."

Alford (Greek Testament, Acts, ii: 17) says, " *The last days* is an exposition of the Hebrew *afterward*, referring it to the days of the Messiah."

Ellicott (Com. for Eng. Readers, Joel, ii: 28) explains " afterward " in Joel, ii: 28, as meaning, " in

the last days," which is "in the Christian dispensation."

But the prophesying was predicted to result from the gift of the Holy Spirit. And since the gift is to be conterminous with the dispensation, the right, at least, to prophesy seems to be guaranteed an equal duration.

2. Joel's representation as to the *extent* of the spiritual effusion seems to argue the permanence of the resultant blessing. It is said "I will pour out my spirit upon *all flesh*, and your * * * daughters shall prophesy."

But one hundred and twenty people (Acts, i: 15) gathered in a single upper room are not "all flesh." Three thousand Jews (Acts, ii: 5, 10), though they be "from every nation under heaven," and though they speak all the languages of the earth (vs. 8-10), are not "all flesh." A few tens of thousands of Jews and gentiles, scattered along the shores of the Mediterranean sea during the lifetime of the apostles, while a hoary heathenism, defiant, had hardly yet been roused to lift the iron heel of persecution to crush the infant church,—are not "all flesh." These words mean something more—something like what God meant when he said to Abram (Gen., xii: 3), "In thee shall all families of the earth be blessed;" or to Isaiah (lvi: 7), "Mine house shall be called an house of prayer for all peoples;" and to Daniel (vii: 27), "And the kingdom, and the dominion, and the

greatness of the kingdoms under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of the Most High; his kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey him." The world has not yet realized the fulness of the promise. So long as two-thirds of the human race are heathen, and nine-tenths of the other third show almost none of the "fruits of the Spirit," we can hardly affirm that the Spirit has been poured out—that is, bestowed abundantly—upon all flesh.

The commentators coincide with this opinion. *Blunt* (Annotated Bible, Joel, ii: 28) says: "Upon all flesh" is "not only upon the Israelites, but on people of every nation under heaven." *Ellicott* (Com. for Eng. Readers, Acts, ii: 2) writes: "The new spiritual power was to extend its working, even into the whole church, * * * and to the uttermost parts of the earth." *Henry* (Joel, ii: 28) interprets the expression as meaning, "Not as hitherto upon Jews only, but upon gentiles also." *Gill* (Joel, ii: 28) explains, "All flesh * * * is all sorts of men, Jews and gentiles, men of all nations, * * * and denotes the abundance of the gifts of the Spirit, both extraordinary and ordinary * * * bestowed on them." *Cowles* (Minor Prophets, Joel, ii: 28) says: "All flesh must mean the whole race without distinction of Jew or gentile. * * * Nor can the yet future periods of the gospel age be shut out. Indeed, numerous prophecies show that in the times yet future there shall

be far richer manifestations of the Spirit's power than the world has yet seen."

3. The Scriptures represent the *Holy Spirit as coming into the world to stay permanently.*

Our Savior's words (Matt. xxviii: 20), "I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world," must be understood as a promise of the Spirit. Speaking of his own departure, he says (Jn., xiv: 2), "I go to prepare a place for you;" and again (xvi: 7), "If I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you." And Christ promised the disciples (xiv: 16), "I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may be with you *for ever*, even the Spirit of truth. * * * Ye know him, for he abideth with you, and shall be in you" (vs. xvii). And when the Spirit had come, Peter explained (Acts ii: 32, 33), "This Jesus * * * being * * * by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, he hath poured forth this which ye see and hear." "And Peter said unto them" (vs. 38, 39), "Repent ye, and be baptized, every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ unto the remission of your sins; and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. For to you is the promise, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call unto him."

Jamieson, F., and B. (Joel, ii: 28) say of Joel's prediction, "That the promise is not restricted to

the first Pentecost, appears from Peter's own words" in the above quotation; and they assign to the words *afar off* an application "both in space and in time." The idea is that the promise of the Holy Spirit is to the elect of God, even to the remotest bounds of the earth and to the latest periods of human history. And the result of his manifestation everywhere will be that the "sons and the daughters shall prophesy."

So *Henderson* (Minor Prophets, Joel, ii: 29) declares, "The repetition, 'I will pour out my Spirit,' shows that the influence, of which, in general, they were to be partakers, was not merely that which consisted in the miraculous gifts, but also that ordinary and saving influence which is experienced by all believers. What incontrovertibly proves that the prophecy includes both a more ordinary, and a more extraordinary or miraculous divine agency, is the extension given to it by the apostle Peter, Acts, ii: 38, 39, where he teaches that it was to comprehend 'all that are afar off,' *i. e.*, the gentiles, 'even as many as the Lord our God shall call.'"

4. The permanence of the prophetic gift may be argued from the *nature of the Holy Spirit's work*.

The work of the Holy Spirit is the *application of the redemption wrought by Christ*, in reconciling men to God. It includes regeneration, or the new birth—the beginning of the Christian life:—"Ex-

cept a man be born of water and the Spirit, he can not enter into the kingdom of God" (Jn., iii: 5.) It also includes sanctification, or the building up of the Christian in holiness:—"As many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God" (Rom., viii: 14); we are called to salvation, "in sanctification of the Spirit" (II Thess., ii: 13).

Hodge (Systematic Theology, Vol. I, p. 532), epitomizes the work of the Holy Spirit as follows:—"It is the special office of the Spirit to convince the world of sin; to reveal Christ, to regenerate the soul, to lead men to the exercise of faith and repentance; to dwell in those whom he thus renews, as a principle of a new and divine life. By this indwelling of the Spirit, believers are united to Christ, and to one another, so that they form one body. This is the foundation of the communion of saints, making them one in faith, one in love, one in their inward life, one in their hopes and final destiny. The Spirit also calls men to office in the church, and endows them with with the qualifications necessary for the successful discharge of its duties. The office of the church, in this matter, is simply to ascertain and authenticate the call of the Spirit. Thus the Holy Ghost is the immediate author of all truth, of all holiness, of all consolation, of all authority, and of all efficiency, in the children of God individually, and in the church collectively."

But the *Holy Spirit works through the truth* as a means. We are "begotten again, not of corrupt-

ible seed, but of incorruptible, through the Word of God, which liveth and abideth" (I Pet., i: 23). "Of his own will he brought us forth by the word of truth" (James, i: 18). Jesus prayed for His disciples, "Sanctify them in the truth, thy word is truth" (Jn., xvii: 17). The Word of God, the Scriptures,—this is the means through which the Holy Spirit saves men and bestows all spiritual blessings upon them. There is no new revelation of truth. The Spirit applies and enforces the old gospel, and that alone (Jn., xiv: 26; xv: 26). Hence we read (Jn., xvi: 13), "When he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he shall guide you into all the truth: for he shall not speak from himself, but what things soever he shall hear, these shall he speak." "He shall glorify me," said Jesus (vs. 14), "for he shall take of mine, and shall declare it unto you."

Hodge brings out this point very distinctly (Systematic Theology, Vol. I, p. 98). "It is also true," says he, "that our Lord promised to send his Spirit, who was to abide with the church, to dwell in his people, to be their teacher, and to guide them into the knowledge of all truth. But what truth? Not historical or scientific truth, but, plainly, revealed truth; truth which he himself had taught, or made known by his authorized messengers."

The *Holy Spirit*, however, does not preach the truth; does not sound the gospel message abroad; does not open the sacred Volume and proclaim its contents to the world. If he did, the work would

have been done long ago and the dark corners of the earth illumined with heavenly light. But God has seen fit to lay that work upon his people. Christians must "hold forth the word of life (Phil., ii: 16) to the attention of men before the Spirit will carry it to their hearts in convicting and converting power. Hence the commission to "preach the gospel" (Mk., xvi: 15) everywhere; to "make disciples of all the nations" (Matt., xxviii: 19); and to teach Christians to observe the whole system of gospel doctrine (vs. 20). And hence it is that the work of God the Holy Spirit has advanced in the world in even measure as Christians have been faithful in their evangelizing labors. God has made the salvation of mankind in part our work. We must sow the seed of gospel truth, before the showers of grace can give the bounteous harvest of souls redeemed.

But just what is this work of ours? This heralding of gospel doctrine?

It is simply the delivery of God's message to men. It is "speaking for" God to our fellows. It is *prophesying* such as Joel foretold. And, as Joel predicted, every man, woman, and child, who hears and heeds the gospel invitation has a divine call and commission to bear the message along to others. And whoso heeds this call and proclaims the message, is a prophet.

And it is because the prophesying of God's people is indispensable to the work of the Spirit that

Joel was inspired to place the two together. Would it not have been exceedingly incongruous to mention prophecy in immediate connection with the Spirit's work for the world throughout the gospel age, if it were a mere incident occurring only a few times at the beginning, or only occasionally afterward, and if it stood in no vital and necessary relation to the Spirit's work? But the fact is, it is God's plan that the Spirit shall not be able to do his work till the people of God do theirs. Our prophesying is a *condition precedent* to any extension of the Spirit's redeeming work. And it is because God is not willing that any should perish, that he declares all his people shall be prophets. He will move them to declare the message of life, that he may prepare the way for the Spirit to the hearts of those who have him not, that they also may receive the blessing and be saved. Prophecy is a permanent and universal gift because it is essential to the work of the Holy Spirit.

We will conclude the discussion of the permanency of the right to prophecy with some pertinent quotations.

"What Moses expressed as a wish—namely, that the people were all prophets, and the Lord would put his Spirit upon them (Numb., xi: 29)—was to be fulfilled in the future" (Keil and Delitzsch, Joel, ii: 28).

"But though the wonders of Pentecost were the first and literal fulfillment of this prophecy, they

by no means exhausted its meaning." The promise is "to the spiritual Israel; to all who, by faith, are made one with Christ. All such partake of the Holy Ghost" (Lange, Joel, ii: 28, Theological).

"The prediction of Joel in its original form still remains for the future, when the complete fulness of the divine Spirit is to be conferred upon the church, which shall then have received into her bosom the countless races of mankind" (Olshausen, Acts, ii: 17-21).

"The first Messianic effusion of the Spirit at Pentecost was the *beginning* of this fulfillment, the completion of which is in the course of a progressive development that began at that time with Israel, and as respects its end is yet future" (Meyer, Acts, ii: 17).

"Having heretofore stated the outward blessings," Joel "now raises their minds to the expectation of extraordinary spiritual blessings which constitute the true restoration of God's people. Fulfilled in earnest (Acts, ii. 17) on Pentecost, * * * more fully at the restoration of Israel and the consequent conversion of the whole world" (Jamieson, F. and B., Joel, ii: 28).

Our last reference contains the most perfect brief statement of the Scripture doctrine as to prophecy that we have yet seen; and it has for us a peculiar value as approaching the subject from the point of view, not of the textual critic, but of the systematic theologian. It is as follows:

" Christ's prophetic work was only *begun* during his earthly ministry; it is continued since his ascension. The inspiration of the apostles; the illumination of all preachers and Christians to understand and to unfold the meaning of the word they wrote; * * * all these are parts of Christ's prophetic work, performed through the Holy Spirit. * * * By virtue of their union with Christ and participation in Christ's Spirit, all Christians are made in a secondary sense prophets (Numb., xi: 29; Joel, ii: 28). All modern prophecy that is true, however, is but the republication of Christ's message—the proclamation and expounding of truth already revealed in Scripture" (Strong, *Theology*, p. 389).

III.—Meaning and Significance of Joel's Prediction.

We have seen that prophecy is not only a miraculous, but also a natural, gift; and that it is not only adapted for permanent and universal use in the proclamation of the gospel, but is even permanently and always an indispensable antecedent to the Spirit's regenerating and sanctifying activities. We will now notice more briefly some further details of the prediction and the scope of its teaching as a whole.

1. In the portion of the prediction under consideration and which we have placed at the beginning of this chapter, Joel mentions but a *single result* of the anticipated effusion of the Holy Spirit—that is, prophecy.

Apparently he mentions several results, namely, first, the prophesying of "sons" and "daughters;" secondly, the dreaming of the "old men;" thirdly, the vision seeing of the "young men." But these three are in reality one and the same thing. Visions and dreams were of old the means by which God most often spoke to his prophets. Says *Calvin* (Com., Joel, ii: 28), "When God manifested himself to the prophets it was usually done, we know, by dreams and visions, as it is said in Numbers (xii: 6). This was, as we may say, the ordinary method. The prophet * * * says that the *gift of prophecy* would be common to men and women, to the old and those of middle age"—*i. e.*, young men.

Joel says nothing of the effects of the outpouring of the Spirit upon "servants" and "handmaids" (vs. 29). But Peter supplies the deficiency by the words (Acts, ii: 18), "and they shall prophesy." So prophesying is the one and only blessing mentioned in these verses as the result of the Spirit's abundant working in the latter days. And that, it is implied, is for all. Sons, daughters, old men, young men, servants, handmaids—all shall prophesy.

The design, in this enumeration of the various classes of people who shall prophesy, evidently is to emphasize the universality of the gift. "All flesh" shall receive it, yea, *even those whom we should least expect to see thus favored*. Prophecy is a function

usually associated with maturity of years and ripeness of understanding; but we are told that "sons" and "daughters"—the young and comparatively inexperienced—shall prophesy: which reminds us of the young people's work of the present day. As between old men and young men, it is to be noted that the higher grade of communication is assigned to the young men (Smith's Bible Dict., p. 617). This indicates not that the young are more highly favored, but that *even they* are not discriminated against on account of their youth. The Spirit gives the best impartially to old and young. The *slaves* were the least promising class—the most ignorant and degraded. But the Spirit honors them like the others. The "servants" and "handmaids" shall receive the same divine anointing, and shall prophesy. Unmarried women and female slaves, also, were the least favored of women. They shall stand upon the same plane of gospel privilege with wives, matrons and men.

When those of whom it was least to have been expected are thus honored, the doctrine that all are honored receives its most impressive exemplification. Thus *Hackett* writes (Com. Acts, ii: 18), "It will be seen that the effusion of the Spirit was to be universal as to the classes of persons that were to participate in it. In other words, it was to be without distinction of sex, age or rank." The *Bible Commentary* states (Acts, ii: 17), that "In earlier ages the extraordinary influences of God the Holy Ghost were

restricted to a few. * * * Now, those influences were to be extended to all men everywhere, without distinction of age, sex, or rank, to gentiles as well as Jews." *Lange* says (Joel, ii: 28), "It is clear * * * that there is no limitation of sex, age or condition, and that not merely particular individuals, but that all are to share in this divine gift—a fulfillment of the wish of Moses (Numb., xi: 29)." *Calvin* explains (Com. Acts, ii: 17) that "There will not be a few prophets only, * * * but all men shall be endued with spiritual wisdom, even to the prophetic excellency. As it is also in Jeremiah, 'Every man shall no longer teach his neighbor; because they shall all know me, from the least unto the greatest' (Jer., xxxi: 34)." The right to prophesy will be universal among the people of God throughout the Christian dispensation, from its feeble beginnings till its glorious consummation.

2. The significance of Joel's prediction is partly to be discovered from the fact that *prophecy is the greatest permanent endowment of the church.*

That prophecy is the best of the gifts, as these are distinguished from the graces, might be inferred from the solitary preëminence assigned to it in connection with the promise of the Spirit. But it has been definitely assigned the first place by apostolic authority. "God hath set some in the church, first apostles (not a permanent gift), secondly prophets, thirdly teachers," etc. (I Cor., xii: 28. See also,

Rom., xii: 6; Eph., iv: 11). The gospel-heralding gift; the human element in the work of redemption, conditioning even the work of the Spirit—prophecy—is far above the gifts of government and management, and even above miracles. It stands next to the gift by which the gospel has been authoritatively recorded and delivered to the church as its Canon, or rule of faith and practice.

But the granting of the best gift implies that inferior gifts are not withholden. He who has a valid title to the best and to the use of it, has necessarily a right to exercise every other gift that he may be fortunate enough to possess. And if God bestows the best, it is a clear intimation that he will surely grant every other really good and needful thing.

There is no guesswork about this. We have divine authority for such reasoning. We read (Rom., viii: 32), "He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not also with him freely give us all things?" *Meyer* translates the last clause of this passage, "how is it possible that he should not also," etc.—representing the meaning to be that it is all but inconceivable that God should withhold any good thing after having given his Son. And *Meyer* adds, "Everything else stands to this highest gift of grace in the relation of concomitant accessory gift." "The inference is from greater to less."

And here is another supreme gift—prophecy—by virtue of which man stands as God's accredited am-

bassador to the world, holding the destinies of mankind at his pleasure, and even conditioning the work of God himself; a gift standing for the best possible individual and social life of humanity. The possession of such a gift signifies the fullness and completeness of the divine benefaction. And in that prophecy is granted without discrimination to all the children of God, it signifies, not indeed that each disciple will have all the gifts, and possibly not that the church will surely have all that it once had; but assuredly it signifies that no gift which is truly desirable and needful and beneficent will ever be wanting, to any one or to all of God's people (Rom., viii: 28).

We may sum up this doctrine in the language of inspiration, which, while echoing Joel's thought, translates it into a broad general principle of religion:—"For ye are *all* sons of God, through faith, in Christ Jesus. * * * There can be neither Jew nor Greek, there can be neither bond nor free, there can be no male and female: for ye all are one man in Christ Jesus" (Gal., iii: 26-28). The lesson is, *equality in Christ*. The right of all to the best gift is the right of all to all gifts, and it means the equality of all men before God, and in the privileges of Christ's kingdom and church. In their relation to Christ and in the largeness of their social prerogative, all human beings irrespective of earthly distinctions, that of sex included, are equal.

3. The significance of Joel's prediction may be

seen, further, in this, that it *does not merely confer a right to prophesy*; it declares that they "*shall prophesy*." They shall not only possess, they shall also exercise, the right. The conceptions are very different. The right to an inheritance and the inheritance itself are two quite different things. They may be permanently dissociated. Servants and women have had the right to prophesy for eighteen hundred years. They have not prophesied to any extent till within the last half century. Joel says they shall have the actual exercise of the right, and not merely the sounding brass of an empty title.

When Joel referred to "servants" and "handmaids," he meant primarily slaves—persons who have no control of their time or their actions, and to whom prophesying, save in the most cursory and imperfect way, is an impossibility. Prophesying, the work of publicly heralding the truths of religion, is incompatible with a state of slavery. And hence Joel, in predicting that slaves shall have the prophetic anointing, was virtually issuing a divine edict of emancipation—"liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound" (Is., lxi: 1; Lk., iv: 18). To a Jew the idea of a slave's prophesying was almost unthinkable. "There is no instance of a slave having the gift of prophecy in the Old Testament" (Bible Com., Joel, ii: 29). So in Peter's announcement of the fulfillment of Joel's prediction, the male and female slaves of men have become the servants and hand-

maidens of God—the Lord’s freemen. Do we not find in this change of conceptions, a suggestion of what the gospel purposes for those in bondage by the promise of the Spirit? *Wordsworth* admirably states the idea in his comment on this passage (Notes, Joel, ii: 29)—“A cheering assurance, that even from the *once enslaved* tribes of Africa, and from among the children of Ham, will be raised up preachers of Christ.”

Christianity, however, does not directly wage war against slavery. Slavery is a system that has its roots deep in human society and far beyond the pale of the church. Before the church was, slavery was—one of the gigantic social wrongs of history; and the church came, a little company of freemen in the Lord, with a divine message of liberty to all men. What shall it do? Shall it straightway smite the giant evil in the face? Shall it declare instant freedom to the slave? Shall it denounce the master as a tyrant, and require repentance and a manumission of all slaves as a condition of acceptance with God? Shall it insist at once and forever upon the slave’s right to be a prophet of God? No, such is not God’s way. A long process of education is necessary before either slaves or masters are fit for such a change. The evil is too great and too deep-seated for direct assault. It must be met and overcome by a process of gradual reduction. The only adequate remedy is by revolutionizing society itself. The gospel leaven must

permeate and transform the very thoughts, feelings, and impulses, not of the church only, but to a certain extent of all men, before emancipation can be safely and wisely accomplished.

Meantime, the institution is recognized, and its horrors are mitigated by precepts addressed to masters and servants (Eph., vi: 5-9; Col., iii: 22-iv: 1)—precepts adapted also to a system of voluntary service. But the ultimate annihilation of it is tacitly left to time and to the outworking of those divine principles of human fraternity by which the gospel is steadily and surely transforming the social life of the world. Joel says this lifting, leavening process shall go on till a better era is revealed to all men; till the fetters of the slave shall fall; till he shall go forth free in Christ; till, his mind and heart illumined by the truth and the Spirit of God, and all disabilities removed, he shall stand before men as the honored herald and representative of God.

Precisely the same thing is true of women's prophesying. The right is distinctly recognized and illustrated in the New Testament (Acts, ii: 1-18; xxi: 9; I Cor., xi: 3-16); but it is nowhere insisted upon or enforced by so much as a single word. Those who had the gift were no doubt specially illumined and specially moved by the Spirit to exercise it, as an illustration and precedent for the distant future. But women are nowhere encouraged to assert their right. Churches and pastors are nowhere exhorted to assert it for them. The whole

subject, with all the blessings it may contain for women and for the world, is left to the revolutions of time and of Christianity—till society, transformed by the Gospel and awakened at last to the demands of truth and justice, shall no longer presume to forbid what God has permitted; and till women shall perceive for themselves that the hour of their opportunity has struck.

Viewed historically, the prophesying of women has been one of the slowest and last of human rights to receive recognition. Even at this hour, at the close of the nineteenth century, when slavery, one of the oldest of social institutions and deepest rooted in the passions and selfishness of men, has virtually disappeared from the earth; woman's right to prophesy is still very far from being generally recognized even in the most thoroughly Christianized communities. Indeed, it is on the whole more generally unrecognized. Traditional misconceptions as to woman's sphere; an old-fashioned and rather vague but very persistent impression that women are physically if not intellectually incapacitated for the prophetic function; and, perhaps most of all, the conviction that they are forbidden by Christ to speak in public—a great variety of reasons including passion, prejudice, ignorance, social conservatism, loyalty to Christ—have conspired to delay woman's entrance upon her promised inheritance. And so central and fundamental is the sex relation to the social life of mankind; so thoroughly

are both sexes animated by the same spirit and controlled by the same principles, true or false; and so foreign to the traditions of society is the prophesying of women—that society itself must be very largely transfused with the spirit and truth of the Gospel before it will be prepared fully to recognize the practice as scriptural and right.

Joel's prediction is thus, not only the assertion of the moral equality of all human beings, but also, by its assurance that the right shall be exercised, a pledge of the ultimate overthrow of everything inconsistent therewith, and of the final complete triumph of the gospel over all adverse opinions and institutions. By holding up to view one of the salient characteristics of the social life of the race, as it should be and as it will be when it is at last reconstructed by the gospel, the prediction serves the double purpose, of directing and inspiring the church in its efforts to attain to the goal of its high calling, and also in a measure to test the degree of its progress and success.

It is doubtful if there is among Christians an adequate and general conception how deeply the spiritual interests of mankind are involved in the prophesying of women. While it is true that prophesying is not everything—while it is not necessarily even *public* speaking; and while it is certain that Christian women have always been good helpers in many ways without addressing public assemblies; yet it is assuredly not a light matter that

an *entire sex* is or is not actively enlisted in sounding the gospel message abroad by those methods usually designated as prophesying. We may not forget that it is God himself who has declared this prerogative of women, and has associated it with the abundant outpouring of his Spirit—the triumph of Christianity. The church can not afford to be indifferent or dilatory in coming to an understanding of the spiritual resources God has provided for her in this direction, or slothful in securing universal recognition and encouragement to the development of them. We may be sure on general principles, and though we were unable to see why, that a right which God saw fit to proclaim more than three-quarters of a millenium before the dawning of the Christian era, has a profound and lasting significance, and lies very near to the prosperity and progress of the Redeemer's kingdom.

We have seen that prophecy is “speaking for” God, or the delivery of God's message of grace to men; that it is of two kinds:—*canonical*, or that by which the truths of revelation were originally communicated to men and made forever available in the Canon of sacred Scripture; and *post-canonical*, or that by which those truths, having once for all been revealed in the Word, are henceforth and forevermore to be proclaimed by the church to all men for their salvation; that since the completion of the Canon the latter is the great gift of the Spirit, the great human element in the work of re-

demption; and that since it is bestowed impartially upon all disciples, irrespective of age, sex, or social condition, it proclaims universal freedom and equality.

We are constrained, however, to notice as we close this chapter, that the commentaries, whose opinions we have quoted in establishing the permanence and universality of the prophetic gift, seem to stagger under the idea that permanence and universality belong to the prophesying of the "daughters." Indeed, their views on this particular head are conspicuously inadequate to their deliverances on the subject at large, and to the cosmic and secular sweep of Joel's majestic prediction. The reasons for this incongruity we shall discover as we advance. Meanwhile, if there is anything in the association of ideas or in historic perspective, the right of the daughters to prophesy is to be one of the grand features of the gospel era. Foretold at a distance in time so great (800 B. C.) that we must suppose only the broad outlines of gospel history to have been contemplated; and foretold in immediate connection with those things that are the very greatest in Christianity—the Spirit, salvation, judgment—the prophesying of women is evidently ranked among the salient characteristics of Christianity. We believe it is destined so to be, and that it will come forward into notice and into conspicuous usefulness in even measure as the latter-day dispensation rises to its glorious consummation.

CHAPTER III.

THE RIGHT ILLUSTRATED.

Acts, *iii*: 1-18: “(1) And when the day of Pentecost was now come, they were all together in one place. (2) And suddenly there came from heaven a sound as of the rushing of a mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. (3) And there appeared unto them tongues parting asunder, like as of fire; and it sat upon each one of them. (4) And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.

“(5) Now there were dwelling at Jerusalem Jews, devout men, from every nation under heaven. (6) And when this sound was heard, the multitude came together, and were confounded, because that every man heard them speaking in his own language. (7) And they were all amazed and marvelled, saying, Behold, are not all these which speak Galileans? (8) And how hear we, every man in our own language, wherein we were born? (9) Parthians and Medes and Elamites, and the dwellers in Mesopotamia, in Judæa and Cappadocia, in Pontus and Asia, (10) in Phrygia and Pamphylia, in Egypt and the parts of Libya about Cyrene, and sojourners from Rome, both Jews and proselytes, (11) Cretans and Arabians, we do hear them speaking in our tongues the mighty works of God. (12) And they were all amazed, and were perplexed, saying one to another, what meaneth this? (13) But others mocking said, they are filled with new wine.

“(14) But Peter, standing up with the eleven, lifted up his voice, and spake forth unto them, saying, Ye men of Judæa, and all ye that dwell at Jerusalem, be this known unto you, and give ear unto my words. (15) For these are not drunken, as ye suppose; seeing it is but the third hour of the day;

(16) but this is that which hath been spoken by the prophet Joel. (17) And it shall be in the last days, saith God, I will pour forth of my Spirit upon all flesh: And your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams: (18) Yea, and on my servants and on my handmaidens in those days will I pour forth of my Spirit; and they shall prophesy."

Peter says the great event of Pentecost was one toward which Joel's prediction pointed forward. It was a first fulfillment, or a beginning of the fulfillment. It introduced a class of events that should continue throughout the Christian dispensation till the coming of the "day of the Lord," and that in the aggregate should constitute the fulfillment as a whole. A consideration of the character and significance of this first fulfillment throws some new and valuable light upon the subject of women's prophesying.

1. The Pentecostal occasion was *divinely arranged*, even to the circumstantial details, and therefore *furnishes no ground for an argument from custom*. The mind of God was perfectly expressed throughout and in all respects, so that what occurred was designed to occur, and designed to occur precisely as it actually did occur. And the record of those events in the book of Acts, in its entirety and to the last detail, is the utterance of infinite Wisdom, for our guidance. As we approach the inspired narrative, therefore, we do not need to disturb ourselves about presumptions derived from the usages of ancient society. There are no such presumptions.

The Christian presumption is that the Word of God is above all customs; that it is legislating customs that shall characterize the new society destined to arise, in which Christ is King, and in which truth and righteousness shall prevail.

It behooves us, then, as we address ourselves to this inspired account of a divine work, to disabuse our minds of any prejudgment based upon customs ancient or modern, and to accept the representations we find here, whether explicit statements or only tacit implications, at their full face value as the infallible and authoritative expression of the mind of God. No other events of gospel history are so strikingly and so fully a transcript of divine thought as these. It was in obedience to a divine command (Acts, i: 4) that the disciples tarried at Jerusalem; by divine direction, no doubt, that they "continued stedfastly in prayer" (i: 14), since thus He met them (ii: 1); it was the Spirit that gave them utterance (vs. 4), and the Spirit produced the "mighty sound" that called the multitude together. All was done, accepted, employed of God as part and parcel of the work by which He himself wrought out the first fulfillment of the promise made by him so many centuries before.

2. The speaking of the disciples on the day of Pentecost was a *sample specimen*, an illustration, of what the Spirit will do for the church in later times. The promise is, that the Spirit shall be poured out on "all flesh" and they "shall proph-

esy." The Spirit was poured out on Pentecost, and some prophesied. It shall be poured out yet many times in the future, and multitudes of others shall prophesy, before the fulness of the promise is realized. The blessing realized then, in fulfillment of the promise, was prophesying. It will be prophesying again. It is always prophesying, or it is not the fulfillment of the promise. And precisely what God meant this great gift to be, to us and to his children forever, he indicates by earnest of first fruits on Pentecost, the feast of first fruits.

This, however, does not imply that all the events of that notable day shall be reduplicated in the ages to come. The birthday of the dispensation, while illustrating the nature and blessings of the entire dispensation, must needs have a character of its own that it does not share with succeeding days—a character calculated to mark the beginning of a new era, to impress upon the minds of men the fact that it was such a beginning, and to set upon it a divine seal indicative of its transcendent importance. To the individual, rather than to the representative, character of the day we may not unreasonably attribute the miraculous element—the rushing sound (vs. 2, 6); the appearance of tongues (vs. 3); the speaking in unknown languages (vs. 4, 6, 11). These phenomena marked the birth throes of the church, and then passed away. (The "tongues" remained for a time and disappeared gradually). But *they* were not prophesying. They

were no part of the prophesying. They were not a vehicle by which God revealed new truth, as he revealed it to his ancient prophets: for no new truth was revealed. They were "signs," by which God announced and attested the gospel, and symbolized forth its universality. They were, so to speak, the hand of God made visible, holding up to view an example of what his people should be and do by divine help throughout the ages to come. The exhibition of that example would not need to be perpetually repeated; but, once given, would be forever held up to view by the inspired testimony of the Christian writers. But the prophesying, of which a sample specimen was thus exhibited, is to be multiplied a million fold till "all flesh" shall hear and heed the gospel call.

The prophesying of Pentecost was a *normal specimen, in kind, of the post-canonical type of prophecy*. It was the proclamation, or preaching, of a gospel that had already been substantially completed, though not yet or for several years afterward committed to writing. In corroboration of this view we notice,

(1) *No new truth was revealed* to the disciples on that occasion. They "spoke for" God, not to declare truth hitherto unknown to them, but to voice forth the message of salvation that had been completed by the ascension of our Lord and taught to the apostles by Jesus during the three years of his earthly ministry, and especially during that won-

derful period of forty days after his resurrection. It was during this latter interval that Jesus appeared unto them "teaching," "giving commandment," and "speaking the things concerning the kingdom of God" (Acts, i: 1-3). It was then, also, that Jesus "*opened their mind* that they might understand the Scriptures; and he said unto them, Thus it is written, *that the Christ should suffer, and rise again from the dead the third day; and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name unto all the nations*, beginning from Jerusalem. Ye are witnesses of these things" (Lk., xxiv: 44-49). It was of these things, these "mighty works of God" (Acts, ii: 11), that they testified on the day of Pentecost, beginning thus the proclamation, that shall be for salvation, to "all the nations;" and it was because this was the burden of their preaching that three thousand were saved in one day. There was no revelation of new truth. None was needed. The revelation had already been made by Jesus to the eleven, and by the eleven to the one hundred and more men and women associated with them (Acts, i: 15).

(2) The preaching of Pentecost was *identical in form and subject-matter with gospel preaching now*. Before the multitude came together, there may, indeed, have been an hour of ecstatic praise and thanksgiving—a confused commingling of many tongues; or, perhaps more likely, there may have been an hour of awe-struck silence before the mani-

fest majesty of the Most High (See Alford, Gr. Test., Acts, ii: 4). But it is certain that, when the multitude had assembled and the speaking to *them* began, it was nothing more nor less than preaching in the native tongue of the speakers. They knew nothing of the foreign tongues, and did not translate their message to make it intelligible. They simply testified to the grace of God, as we do now, according to their own knowledge and ability; and God, by a miracle, and without any of their coöperation, translated the message into the foreign tongues. Apparently this translation took place before the message was spoken, so that Jews spoke as though they were foreigners. They spoke the foreign tongue as though it were their own (Acts, ii: 4, 6, 11), and, so far as appears, supposing that it was their own.

(3) There is no necessity for supposing *any other or higher illumination* of the minds of the speakers, the apostles excepted, than is possible by the ordinary methods of grace in all ages of gospel history.

The apostles must, indeed, be presumed to have spoken in the exercise of the gift that constituted them the infallible teachers of the new faith. But the apostles are sharply distinguished from the other speakers. When an authoritative statement of truth was needed, for the multitude and for the church in all ages, "*Peter, standing up with the eleven, lifted up his voice and spake forth unto them*" (vs. 14).

But there is no necessity for supposing that the others spoke with a miraculous infallibility, or in the exercise of any other gift than normal post-canonical prophecy, such as all disciples of Christ may share. The abundant bestowal of the Spirit—the outpouring—was promised to “all flesh.” That is to say, God the Holy Spirit will dwell in power with his people *throughout the “last days,”* and not merely on the first of these days. And where He is, He manifests himself in calling to remembrance known truths of the gospel, suggesting them for appropriate utterance, and giving them “power” over the minds and hearts of the hearers.

He did not more than this on Pentecost; and all this he does now for his obedient and faithful servants. If much of the vividness and power of the divine manifestation is wanting now, it may be attributable in part to the absence of the miraculous accompaniment; but more to the sins and worldliness of the church. And it is not possible for us to doubt that, when the Almighty God manifests *himself* to his people, as he has promised to do (Jn., xiv: 21), there will be substantially the same intensity of interest and the same manifestations of saving power, that were displayed so wonderfully on that first golden harvest morning of gospel history. There is no adequate explanation of that gracious display save that which regards it as a *beginning* merely—an earnest, pledge, and illustration—of what God has in store for all his faithful people forever.

3. *Women prophesied* on the day of Pentecost.

It was not, on rational grounds, absolutely necessary to the vindication of woman's right to prophesy in the latter days that women should have been present among those upon whom the Spirit first descended. The right to prophesy had already been granted irrevocably. It was established in Joel's unmistakable prediction irrespective of anything that might transpire on the day of Pentecost. No slaves were present on that day, but the blessing of the gospel is theirs as surely as though they had been there. The right to prophesy, with an implied loosening of the shackles, is granted certainly and forever by the ancient prediction. And so is woman's right. It is not at all contingent upon their speaking on the day of Pentecost. But they spoke; and their speaking adds valuable confirmation and exemplification to the old promise.

That women were present on the day of Pentecost is distinctly implied in Acts, i: 14, where it is said that the apostles "all with one accord *continued stedfastly* in prayer, *with the women*, and Mary, the mother of Jesus," etc. This verse indicates the personae of the company that was wont to assemble in the "upper chamber" during the days of waiting. It was a definite and certain number of specific people, not a fluctuating assembly. The same persons were all there all the time, to the number of about 120. If there were any exceptions, they were slight—not sufficient to estab-

lish a noteworthy variation from the rule that all were habitually in attendance. It follows, therefore, that all were present when the day of Pentecost arrived and the Spirit was poured out. The women were there, as usual, with the rest.

This was a remarkable circumstance, even if we suppose that women did not lead vocally in prayer. In the synagogues of the Jews and in the temple service, women never assembled with the men, but they occupied a separate compartment where they were out of sight of them (Bible Com., Acts, i: 14; Schaff, Popular Com., *Id.*). But here among the followers of Christ a new thing is found—women meeting *with* the men. What does it mean? Undoubtedly, that the practice, and perhaps the instructions, of Jesus had favored a freer commingling of the sexes than was usual among the Jews. Certainly it indicates that the followers of Christ were not paying any very reverential heed to custom.

But it means more than this. That little company of men and women were waiting and looking for something—for that which Jesus a few days before had bidden them tarry for—even for the Holy Spirit that was shortly to be given. Did they know and realize that the hour was at hand when a certain ancient promise of Jehovah was to receive its fulfillment? Did they know that *they* were making ready for that fulfillment? Did those devoted women, who had followed their Lord from

place to place with loving ministrations (Lk., viii: 2, 3), realize that they were the chosen of God to receive that great blessing, and that they were shortly to show forth in their own persons the enlargement of spiritual enlightenment and of social privilege which God had in store for the whole sex forever? Perhaps not. But if not, God knew. God had never forgotten his promise that the "sons" and the "daughters" should "prophesy;" and now he had a little company of sons and daughters waiting together—waiting contrary to custom, but according to the purpose of God—for the hour of realization. That the inspired writer is so particular to mention women as meeting constantly with the apostles seems to indicate the mind of the Spirit that women must be regarded as an *essential element of that company, for the purpose for which they were assembled and waiting—namely, for the outpouring of the Spirit.*

The extreme and painstaking care with which the inspired writer has included the whole number of habitual attendants in the blessing of Pentecost, argues that women were present and prophesied on that occasion. We read that "When the day of Pentecost was now come, they"—the usual company of 120—"were all together in one place;" that the appearance of tongues "sat upon each one of them;" and that "they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and began to speak" (Acts, ii: 1-4). Any intelligent person reading such language must con-

clude, either that the words are employed very loosely and with little regard for the sense, or that, if women were present, they certainly are represented as speaking.

And afterward, when Peter rose to explain the wonderful occurrences, and said, "This is that which hath been spoken by the prophet Joel, * * * your sons and your daughters shall prophesy," would there not have been a manifest inconsistency and lack of correspondence between the words and the facts, if women, being present, had not prophesied? Commentators generally take this view; and many of them, as *Ellicott*, *Bengel*, and the *Bible Commentary*, refer to Acts, i: 14, in confirmation.

4. The prophesying of women on the day of Pentecost, like that of the apostles, was preaching. There was no difference. For the women, as for the men, the gift of tongues, unintelligible to the disciples (I Cor., xiv: 2, etc.), became true prophecy—true speaking for God *to men*; true preaching—when it was addressed to those of the multitude who understood the particular dialect spoken (Acts, ii: 6, 8). For the women, as for the men, the burden of that preaching was "the mighty works of God"—the incarnation, resurrection, and ascension of Jesus, and the salvation of sinners through his blood. How much of the harvest that followed as the legitimate fruit of that preaching—the conviction and conversion of a vast multitude of

people—was due to the preaching of the women, we never may know. But we do know that they had their share in it; and we know that, if they had not done their part, something would have been wanting from that day's harvest. And we know, also, that the day of Pentecost was typical of the world's great day of Christian work; and that, as women are called to participate in the work—as they, too, shall prophesy—the work of God and of his church will never be rightly and completely done till women do their part, in heralding abroad the message of salvation.

Adam Clark has spoken truly and to the point as to the prophesying of women on Pentecost. He says (Com. on I Cor., xi: 5, Old Edition), "Whatever may be the meaning of prophesying, in respect to the *man*, it has precisely the same meaning in respect to the woman. So that some women, at least, as well as some men, might speak to others to edification, and exhortation, and comfort (I Cor., xiv: 3). And this kind of prophesying, or teaching, was predicted by Joel (ii: 28), and referred to by Peter (Acts, ii: 17). And had there not been such gifts bestowed on women, the prophecy could not have had its fulfillment." And again (Note on Rom., xvi: 11), "That no preacher can do more every person must acknowledge, because to edify, exhort, and comfort are the prime ends of the gospel ministry. If women thus prophesied, then women preached."

5. The preaching of women on the day of Pentecost was before a *promiscuous assembly of the largest size and of the most public character imaginable*. The idea that the women withdrew to more private assemblies is unauthorized and against the positive demands of the inspired narrative.

The conception of Joel is, that in the latter days *the old arbitrary discriminations and inequalities shall be done away, and all classes of society shall stand together, on one common plane of exalted privilege*. And now the day has come for the fulfillment; God has gathered a company of men and women to receive the blessing and illustrate the equality; and it is expressly said they were "all together in one place" (vs. 1), the Spirit sat upon "each one of them" (vs. 3), and they "all" spoke (vs. 4). There the Spirit leaves them, all together and all speaking. Who shall separate them? Is it not obvious that the design of the Spirit was to make the realization correspond to the prediction, and to show that the equality foretold has now begun to be an actual fact? That the oneness of all classes in the prediction, and that in the fulfillment, correspond; and that they were made to correspond for the express purpose of showing to the world the precise nature of the blessing conferred upon mankind by that ancient promise?

We might not have been able to anticipate just what form the equality of rights predicted by Joel would take in the realization. But when the Holy

Spirit has made certain representations, though they be less complete than we could wish, if they are evidently responsive to the prediction, they are controlling. Since infinite Wisdom has given us no more, we must suppose that these representations were meant to be final and authoritative—a rule of faith and practice. Knowing as we do that there are no partialities and arbitrary discriminations in religion, and that God has promised *to all alike* the privilege of prophesying; when in the fulfillment of the promise we are told that a company of men and women are all in one place, *together*, speaking, we are not at liberty to suppose that a part of the company were somewhere else speaking under *dissimilar* conditions. Even though it is evident that the whole company must have changed their location, we are not at liberty to suppose that they separated. The idea that they were together belongs to the finality of the inspired statement, as a part of the correspondence between prediction and fulfillment. The supposition that women addressed different audiences from the men is an unjustifiable substitution of our own private opinions for the positive teachings of Scripture. A new revelation from God would be needed to establish such a supposition.

The *size and publicity of the Pentecostal audience* were matters of special divine arrangement. The “sound” that called the people together (vs. 6) might have been graduated to a milder note, and a company of only two or three hundred assembled.

But God sought to make a mighty display of his power, and to gather a multitude whose conversion would fitly introduce the dispensation of his grace. But the plans of God are self-consistent. They work together in ten thousand unexpected ways, each part reflecting light on every other. The gathering of that great throng served also to illustrate the character of the prophetic gift conferred on women.

We observe that, as prophesy is greatest among the gifts bestowed upon the church (I Cor., xii: 28); so the right granted to women and illustrated in the speaking of the day of Pentecost was the *highest type* of prophecy. It was preaching, or teaching, the gospel to a promiscuous audience of the largest and most public description—to an unorganized assembly of thousands of people.

That God granted women such an occasion for the first exercise of their new-found prerogative, signifies that woman's right to prophesy is without restriction and equal to man's in several important respects: First, as to *publicity*; secondly, as to the *size and promiscuousness of the audience*; thirdly, as to the *subject-matter of discourse*. If women may address so large an audience as that of Pentecost, they may address audiences of any size. If there is nothing improper in their speaking to such an assembly of men, there can be no impropriety in their appearing before any company of people simply because men are present. And if they may ex-

ercise the highest prophetic function—teaching, or preaching the gospel—then there is no theme and no style of public discourse too lofty for their use, and none is forbidden on account of its superior dignity. Such is evidently the case. And in these respects, as in others, the blessing of Pentecost was but a gathering of the first fruits of that gracious harvest which, in its multiplied beneficence, is to extend to “all flesh” and to continue throughout the “last days.” The speaking of Pentecost illustrated the nature of woman’s permanent right to prophesy.

It is difficult to believe that the right thus bestowed on women by inspired precept and precedent will be or can be materially altered by subsequent divine legislation. The gift of God that bears the seal of perpetuity is not likely to be retracted; and, in fact, the gift of the right to prophesy never is retracted or modified. It stands today, as it stood on the evening of that first Pentecost, a right to speak for Christ before the most public promiscuous assemblies and on the weightiest themes.

By such a gift the moral *equality of the sexes* is emphasized and honor done to woman’s intellectual endowments. If it does not necessarily declare woman’s mind to be equal to man’s, it does grant her a social liberty equal to his, and the right to use the best of all the powers God has given, as freely as man does. It signifies, moreover, that there is nothing indelicate or unwomanly in even

the most public kind of public speaking. Also, that there is nothing unmasculine in men's receiving instruction from the public teaching of women—no pride of sex that ought to be offended and to forbid their profiting by such discourse. The mind and heart of woman was given to be used for God and for humanity; and, in the doctrine as to women's prophesying, the Word proclaims that woman's sphere is not restricted to the home, but that it has an indefinite range of activity outside—a work of heralding abroad the love of Christ—that is honorable alike to those who speak and those who hear, and is wholly beneficent in all its relations.

6. The *history subsequent to Pentecost* furnishes no fulfillment of Joel's prediction at all comparable to that of the Pentecostal occasion. Women's prophesying virtually disappears from view. We read of four daughters of Philip who prophesied (Acts, xxi: 9); but as to when, where, how, and how much they prophesied we know nothing. Paul tacitly recognizes the right and speaks as though some Corinthian women had prophesied (I Cor., xi: 5); but whether in the church or outside, and what the circumstances were, we can only conjecture. And that is all. There is nothing whatever in the early history of Christianity that is at all suggestive of such largeness of privilege, freedom, and equality with men, as constitute the very essence of Joel's prediction and of the Pentecostal

fulfillment. That first fulfillment is the only one mentioned as a fulfillment, and the only one that at all embodies the spirit and scope of the prediction. There is nothing to show that the apostles, or those taught by them, undertook to curb the tendencies or to overcome the prejudices of the age with a view to establishing woman's right to prophesy; nothing to show that women actually exercised the right to any great extent. The reverse is true. And the times were not favorable. The same social conditions that may have suggested to the audience on the day of Pentecost the thought of a drunken revel (Acts, ii: 13), were strongly adverse to women's cultivating the role of public teachers. The church would afford the most hopeful field for the exercise of their gifts; and in the church, as we shall see, their speaking was not encouraged.

For these reasons, woman's right to prophesy became dormant, and in the main was sleeping for upwards of eighteen centuries, till at last, the leaven of the gospel having transformed the social conditions, it awoke, and women began, for the first time in the world's history in real earnest, to enter upon the heritage of privilege guaranteed them by Joel, and illustrated for them on Pentecost.

7. The *Pentecostal occasion furnished nothing more than an earnest and illustration* of what God had promised. This is apparent from the incompleteness of that first fulfillment. True so far as it went—truly illustrating the nature of the right con-

ferred, and truly suggesting the great transformations divine grace was preparing for the world—it yet went but a lamentably small way toward the realization itself. The events of a single spring morning embraced within a range of territory that could be compassed by the sound of a human voice, were not the whole of the great boon God had in store for all flesh forever. The equality of privilege between men and women that must be held in place by a miracle against the ridicule and active hostility of an adverse public sentiment, does not amount to much—it amounts to nothing—unless it be as an illustration and pledge of what the gospel in its progressive developments shall accomplish for the whole world.

(1) The “*servants*” and “*handmaids*”—slaves—had no part in the prophesying of Pentecost, as they had in Joel’s promise. Had God forgotten the slaves? Or was the first fulfillment but a single specimen, for *some* of the objects of God’s grace, of what in the ripeness of his providence he would do for *all*?

Peter, quoting Joel’s prediction, did not quote it in its original form and meaning. He adapted it to the occasion, following for this purpose the erroneous translation of the Seventy. Since no slaves were present among the speakers on Pentecost, and since they were therefore not under consideration in Peter’s explanation of the events of that day, he speaks not of them, but only of the servants and

handmaidens of God, who were present. But Peter was inspired. He took a narrow view of the prediction and of the events transpiring before him because the narrow view belonged to the occasion. God took that method to stamp the character of incompleteness upon it; to show that it had but a beginning of good things to come—a bare foretaste of the blessings God had prepared for all his people in the latter days.

(2) On the day of Pentecost none but *Jews*, by birth or adoption (Acts, ii: 5, 10), were present; and none, even of the inspired apostles, had yet risen to the conception that “all flesh” means gentiles, on an equality with Jews (Acts, x: 9-20; xi: 1-4).

(3) The *gift of tongues*, used as an evangelizing agency but on the single occasion of Pentecost—why given precisely as it was, unless, in addition to its attesting value, which it shared in common with all “signs,” it also served to picture forth in prophetic symbolism the work that Christ should do for all mankind in the ages to come? As *Lange* beautifully puts it (Acts, ii: 4):—

“When the disciples, filled with the Spirit of the Father and the Son, and, elevated in thought and feeling, uttered aloud the praises of God in solemn adoration, and employed for this purpose various foreign languages, they prefigured in their persons the entire sanctified human race of a future and distant age, in which all generations, tongues and lan-

guages, will serve and glorify God, and his Anointed, in the Holy Ghost."

And not merely the occasion as a whole, but also in all consistency that part of it which specially related to women, constituted but a "germinant accomplishment" — "only the first steps" (Bible Com., Acts, ii: 17)—in the fulfillment that shall one day be characteristic of the civilizations of the whole world.

Such, in fine, is the scriptural foundation of woman's right to prophesy; and such the right. The right is plain, the foundation ample. For, while the texts are few, they belong to that rare number, lying just at the heart of the gospel, whose meaning and scope are illustrated by many converging lines of divine testimony. We believe the doctrine must commend itself to the Christian consciousness of the entire body of Christ:—To the scholarly, as voicing the all but unanimous conclusions of biblical critics and expositors as to the teaching of the inspired texts; and to all, as giving to God's words an interpretation that is natural and obvious, and to women a freedom in Christian service that seems reasonable and beneficent, as well as conformable to the spirit of Christianity.

On the other hand, those who have followed our argument thus far can not but be aware that we have the gravest questions yet before us. And there is a class of inquiries that must almost inevitably arise in any thoughtful mind at this stage of the

discussion. For example, Is this right to prophesy, so freely given to women, precisely the same thing in all respects for women as for men? Do the observable differences in the physical and mental endowments of the two sexes mark no corresponding differences in their prophesying? Do the characteristic differences of function, that are everywhere apparent in the domestic relations, suddenly disappear as we pass forth from the portals of the home? And is the work of woman in the church and in society precisely identical in its entirety and in detail with man's?

Or, as we go forth from the domestic circle, do we still find the distinguishing fact of sex stamped upon all human activities—upon the public as well as the private—determining men to certain classes of public responsibilities, and women to certain other classes—distributing the world's work in church and state and in society somewhat as it is distributed in the family? It would not be surprising if this last hypothesis should prove to be correct. And if it is, what is the principle of distribution? And how is it to be applied so as to be practically available and efficient?

Such questions as these are bound to arise. And they ought to arise. They are not the language of a curious and prying inquisitiveness, but an expression of the real needs of the church and of Christian workers. If the children of God are to reconstruct human society according to a divine concep-

tion, they must know that conception, and know how to work it out. Light upon these points God has given, in the three passages that remain to be considered, and in other relevant texts.

CHAPTER I V.

THE RIGHT QUALIFIED.

I Cor., xi: 3-16: "(3) But I would have you know, that the head of every man is Christ; and the head of the woman is the man; and the head of Christ is God. (4) Every man praying or prophesying having his head covered, dishonoreth his head. (5) But every woman praying or prophesying with her head unveiled dishonoreth her head: for it is one and the same thing as if she were shaven. (6) For if a woman is not veiled, let her also be shorn: but if it is a shame to a woman to be shorn or shaven, let her be veiled. (7) For a man indeed ought not to have his head veiled, forasmuch as he is the image and glory of God: but the woman is the glory of the man. (8) For the man is not of the woman; but the woman of the man: (9) for neither was the man created for the woman; but the woman for the man: (10) For this cause ought the woman to have *a sign of* authority on her head, because of the angels. (11) Howbeit, neither is the woman without the man, nor the man without the woman, in the Lord. (12) For as the woman is of the man, so is the man also by the woman; but all things are of God. (13) Judge ye in yourselves: is it seemly that a woman pray unto God unveiled? (14) Doth not even nature itself teach you, that, if a man have long hair, it is a dishonor to him? (15) But if a woman have long hair, it is a glory to her: for her hair is given her for a covering. (16) But if any man seemeth to be contentious, we have no such custom, neither the churches of God."

The right to prophesy, while illustrating and emphasizing the moral equality of the sexes, is *not* in all

respects identically the same thing for both. For the apostle, speaking of women's prophesying as of an acknowledged right, declares *how* they should exercise it, namely, with a distinguishing badge or emblem of their sex worn conspicuously upon the head—they should be "veiled." Men should appear differently, namely, with uncovered heads. While the sexes are equal, the public manifestations of the equality are to some extent different. The presumption derived from diversity of functions in domestic life is justified.

This chapter considers the right of women to prophesy as *qualified* by the divine law of the sex relation, and it speaks, first, of the *nature*, and, secondly, of the *emblem* of the relation.

I.—Nature of the Sex Relation.

So fundamental is the relation of sex to all human life; so immediate and so controlling is its influence on all social problems; and, in particular, so vital and so various are the bearings of the doctrine upon the present discussion from this point on, that we shall need to dwell with somewhat of care and particularity upon the elucidation of it. The Scriptures regard the subject from three points of view, according as mankind are conceived of as *innocent*, as *fallen*, or as *redeemed*.

1. The sex relation in *man's primal state of innocence*, or the original and ideal conception, is de-

scribed very briefly. It is suggested by the single word *help*. The inspired statement is as follows:—

“ And the Lord God said, It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him an help meet for him ” (Gen., ii: 18). Accordingly “ the Lord God caused a deep sleep to fall upon the man, and he slept; and he took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh instead thereof: and the rib which the Lord God had taken from the man, made he a woman, and brought her unto the man. And the man said, this is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh: She shall be called Woman [Heb., *Ishah*, feminine of *Ish*, man], because she was taken out of Man (vs. 21–23).

Respecting the new society thus established we may remark:

(1) The man was made before the woman and independently of her. He was created and received an intimation of his life work before the woman came into being.

The second chapter of Genesis is a more detailed account of what in chapter one is expressed by the single clause, “ male and female created he them ” (vs. 27). So in the second chapter we read that God created man (vs. 7), planted a garden, and put the man in it (vs. 8), “ to dress it and to keep it ” (vs. 15). And God created the beasts and fowls, and brought them to Adam “ to see what he would call them ” (vs. 19). And Adam named them, everything apparently being in pairs,

save alone the man himself. "But for man there was not found an help meet for him" (vs. 20). Then follows the creation of woman to supply that lack (Murphy, Gen., ii: 18).

(2) *Woman was created*, not for a separate and independent existence, but *but in response to man's need, to help him*. Man, already created and called to his life work by the voice of God and by his physical, mental and moral endowments, was not equal to the right performance of his work; and woman came, not to do another and different work of her own, but to enter into man's work, supplementing and completing his efficiency. She was not to do it *for* him, releasing him and bearing his burden in his stead; but *with* him, helping him to do it. The conception is, that the world's work is man's—he is the master—and woman was created to do a part of man's work for him. Man and woman together are called to do man's work. So, thousands of years afterward, the Creator comments on his design:—"The man is not of the woman; but the woman of the man; for neither was the man created for the woman; but the woman for the man" (I Cor., xi: 8, 9).

The *Pulpit Commentary* generalizes on the creative act as follows:—"All that Adam's nature demanded for its completion, physically, intellectually, socially, was to be included in this *other self* who was soon to stand by his side. Thus in man's need and woman's power to satisfy that need, is

laid the foundation for the divine institution of marriage" (Gen., ii: 18).

(3) As woman was created to help man *she is subordinate* to him *in point of authority*. A help is not a principal, but a subordinate. The help does not decide upon the work to be done or the measures to be adopted. That is the principal's prerogative, and man is the principal.

We may not fritter away the meaning of the word "help" by combining it with another and making "helpmeet" of it, with a vague and undefined sense. A help in the sex relation is precisely what it is in every other earthly relation—in domestic service, on the farm, in the office, everywhere—*one engaged in doing another's will and work*, what he can not do or does not wish to do. The work belongs to him who hires or otherwise acquires the help. Neither the ownership nor the right of control belongs in any sense to the help. And woman was created "for the man" as a "help."

(4) Woman is a help *meet* for man—equal to him in moral dignity and worth, and fit to be his companion. Speaking generically she is man. She is endowed with all that is essential to humanity, precisely as man is. We read (Gen., i: 27), "And God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he *them*." And God "blessed them, and called their name Adam (or man), in the day when they were created" (Gen., v: 2).

The idea of the word "meet," in the expression "help meet for him" is variously conceived, as "at his side" (Kalesch); "fitting" (Delitzsch), "suited to," or "matching him" (Bible Com.). *Murphy* explains it (Gen., ii: 18) as signifying "one who may not only reciprocate his feelings, but take an intelligent and appropriate part in his active pursuits." Commenting on verses 21 and 22, he says the woman was designed to be "a helpmeet for him, in company with him, on a footing of equality with him."

Henry, quaintly commenting upon the "rib," says (Gen., ii: 21), "The woman was made * * * not out of his head to top him, not out of his feet to be trampled on by him, but out of his side to be equal with him, under his arm to be protected, and near his heart to be beloved."

The sex relation, as it came in its divine excellence from the hand of the Maker, may therefore be described as consisting of two essential elements:—First, the *equality of the sexes* in the aggregate of their humanity; Secondly, the *subordination of woman* in the exercise of her will, and in the sphere of her activity.

(5) Ideally, the *two sexes* thus related *constitute a unity*. "Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh" (Gen., ii: 24). Our Savior quotes these words in reply to the Pharisees' question respecting divorce, and adds, to

emphasize yet more the sanctity of the bond, "So that they are no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder" (Matt., xix: 6).

The original ordinance that man and wife should cleave together and become "one flesh," was evidently not designed for our first parents, but for their posterity, since it speaks of leaving father and mother (Gen., ii: 24), which Adam and Eve did not possess. It signifies that those to whom the marriage bond is voluntary, and who are not therefore like our first parents literally "one flesh" by creation, should be as truly one in all their earthly interests and affections as though they were in very deed but one person; or as though every woman had been made as Eve was, out of the flesh and bones of her husband.

"The woman was created, not of dust of the earth, but from a rib of Adam, because she was formed for an inseparable unity and fellowship of life with the man, and the mode of her creation was to lay the actual foundation for the moral ordinance of marriage. As the moral idea of the unity of the human race required that man should not be created as a genus or plurality, so the moral relation of the two persons establishing the unity of the race required that man should be created first, and then the woman from the body of the man" (Keil and Delitzsch, Gen., ii: 28).

The unity of our first parents having been estab-

lished and declared, as a permanent type of the sex relation, it is formally recognized by the final and complete enunciation of the Great Commission to Humanity, that had previously been partially announced to Adam alone (Gen., ii: 15). We read (Gen., i: 28), "And God blessed them: and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it; and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth." There are not two dominions, or two in competition for dominion; but two, regarded, and that should regard themselves, as one, are sent to win dominion together—the man as principal, the woman as helper.

(6) *The ideal sex relation is marriage.* The whole history of the origin of the first woman is summed up in this, that she was created as a wife. She was not, like man, formed to a state of solitary independence, from which she was at liberty to escape or not at her pleasure. Such a choice was never hers. She became a wife in becoming a woman. And so, unless we suppose Eve to have been less favored by creation than her daughters have been by birth, marriage must be conceived of as the normal destination and natural sphere of women. But we must suppose Eve to have been, with one exception, the most favored of women. She alone found her place as the gift, unalloyed by sin, of infinite Wisdom and Love. Her place was

ideal. Ideally, therefore, a woman is a wife; the sex relation is marriage; and the family is the permanent and universal social unit.

2. The sex relation in man's *fallen or sinful state*, and as affected by sin, is indicated by the sentence pronounced on Eve and her posterity (Gen., iii: 16)—“Thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee.” This is the first we have heard of *ruling*. The idea seems to be that woman, created to be the equal companion and willing helper of man, shall become his slave. Man, perverted by sin, ceases to be the loving and chivalrous protector, and becomes the selfish tyrant and oppressor.

“That is,” says *Bush* (Notes, Gen., iii: 16), “Thy desire shall be subject to the will and pleasure of thy husband. * * * Instead of being considered as an equal and a companion, woman should be subjected to degradation and viewed as little better than the slave of an imperious master.”

Calvin writes (Com., Gen., iii: 16), “She had, indeed, previously been subject to her husband, but that was a liberal and gentle subjection. Now, however, she is cast into servitude.”

Delitzsch brings out the conception more in detail (New Com., Gen., iii: 16): “The woman will henceforth involuntarily follow the leading of the man, and be subject even against her will to his dominion. The subordination of the woman to the man was intended from the beginning; but now that

the harmony of their mutual wills in God is destroyed, the subordination becomes subjection. The man may command as master, and the woman is bound, externally and internally, to obey. That slavish subjection of the woman to the man which was customary in the ancient world, and still is so in the East, and which revealed religion has gradually made more tolerable and consistent with her human dignity, is the result of sin."

Practically, the nature of the sex relation as perverted by sin is only indirectly relevant to our discussion. We are seeking true, not perverted, standards; ideals set up by God, not desolations wrought by the Enemy. And while the doctrine of the fallen state has its value, as bringing out into a clearer light by contrast the controlling truths of creation and of the gospel, we need only to concern ourselves about these.

3. *The sex relation in Christianity* is matter of positive doctrinal statement in the following passages among others. Incidentally it is often referred to as an illustration of spiritual truth, with the result, however, in these latter days, that the illustration is reversed, the truth shedding light upon the relation. As directly didactic we quote:—

I Cor., xi: 3—"But I would have you know, that the head of every man is Christ; and the head of the woman is the man; and the head of Christ is God."

Eph., v: 22-33—"Wives, be in subjection unto

your own husbands, as, unto the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife, as Christ also is the head of the church, being himself the savior of the body. But as the church is subject to Christ, so let the wives also be to their husbands in everything. * * * And let the wife see that she fear her husband."

Col., iii: 18—"Wives, be in subjection to your husbands, as is fitting in the Lord."

Titus, ii: 5—"The young women * * * being in subjection to their own husbands."

I Pet., iii: 1-6—"In like manner, ye wives, be in subjection to your own husbands. * * *. For after this manner aforetime the holy women also, who hoped in God, adorned themselves being in subjection to their own husbands: as Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him lord: whose children ye now are, if ye do well," etc.

With respect to the teaching of these passages we remark:

(1) They refer to the *ideal state of things under Christianity*. They conceive of mankind as loyal to Christ, their "head;" as belonging to the "new humanity," descended from the "second Adam" (Rom., v: 14, and note in Annotated Par. Bible; I Cor., xv: 45). The subjection of the wife to the husband is normally analogous to that of man (in the generic sense, including both sexes), or of the church, to Christ; and of Christ to the Father. Christianity does not reenact the demoralization of

sin, and make it a permanent law or condition of society. It is remedial—it corrects the evils wrought by sin, and leads us out into the liberty of the sons of God. And although in its consequences sin never will be completely remedied till all things are made new (as in the case of wearying toil (Gen., iii: 17, 19), the curse of thorns and thistles (vs. 18), sorrow in childbirth (vs. 16), and mortality (vs. 19)), yet the gospel doctrine is the divinely perfect truth—the ideal—representing what mankind should be, and following which our minds and hearts and lives shall in due time be made free. The gospel doctrine of the sex relation is as perfect and as permanent as the doctrine in the same verse (I Cor., xi: 3; Eph., v: 23) as to the relation of the Christian to Christ, or of Christ to the Father.”

(2) *The subjection of the wife to the husband is parallel to the subjection of man, or of the church, to Christ.* The one subjection resembles and illustrates the other. Christ is the *head* of man; man is the *head* of the woman. The same word describes both relations. And, as headship is the correlative of subjection, man is subject to Christ, as woman is to man. Let us notice the relation of man or of the church to Christ, that we may catch truly the divine teaching as to the relation of the woman to the man. We observe,

The *work* of the church is not its own, but Christ's. Even we ourselves are not our own. We are his servants, and his summons to us is, “Go,

work to-day in *my vineyard*." The work we are to do in his vineyard is to enter into the work that brought him from heaven—the work of saving the world. The part he assigns us is, "holding forth the word of life"—"speaking for" God in the utterance of the gracious message of salvation, through which the Holy Spirit works conviction, regeneration, and sanctification to sinners; and by holy lives illustrating and attesting the truth of the divine message committed to us—as lights sending forth in a lower sphere the very radiance of the Son of Righteousness. The work is Christ's.

The controlling *will* also is his. "If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love; even as I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in his love" (Jn., xv: 10). "Ye are my friends if ye do the things which I command you" (vs. 14). "He that hath my commandments and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me" (xiv: 21).

The sphere of the church's activity is in the work of Christ, and Christ's will is its law. But, "as the church is subject to Christ, so let the wives also be to their husbands" (Eph., v: 24):

(3) The same parallelism is declared between the sex relation and that subsisting between *Christ and the Father*.

With reference to Christ we notice, that in the *sphere of his work* he was subject. "I glorified thee on the earth, having accomplished the work which thou hast given me to do" (Jn., xvii: 4). "Verily,

verily, I say unto you, the Son can do nothing of himself, but what he seeth the Father doing; for what things soever he doeth, these the Son also doeth in like manner" (v: 19). "My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to accomplish his work" (iv. 34).

Christ was also subject in all things to the *will* of his Father. "I am come down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me" (Jn., vi: 38). "Neither have I come of myself, but he sent me" (viii: 42). "Therefore doth the Father love me, because I lay down my life, that I may take it again. * * * This commandment received I from my Father" (x: 17, 18). "The things therefore which I speak, even as the Father hath said unto me, so I speak" (xii: 50).

The sphere of the Savior's activity is in the work of his Father, and the Father's will is his law. But, as "the head of Christ is God," so "the head of the woman is the man."

Thus by a triple parallelism, in which two of the relations compared are plain beyond all question, it appears that the New Testament proclaims the subjection of women to their husbands in two particulars:—First, in the *sphere of their work*, and, secondly, in the *exercise of their wills*. This carries us back in thought to the doctrine of creation, that woman was given to man as a helper. But as a helper she is subject in work and in will. The New Testament, therefore, as was to be expected, enun-

ciates, not the doctrine of the fall, but that of the original and sinless state of humanity. Christianity is remedial. It revokes the penalty of sin, and recreates humanity, loosing the bonds of the captive, and restoring all who experience its regenerating grace to the freedom of the state from which in Adam we fell. It restores women to the original and ideal helpmate relation.

(4) The New Testament distinctly recognizes the moral *equality* of the sexes. Subjection is no more a mark of inferiority to woman than to Christ. Of the Son, eternally subject to the Father (I Cor., xv: 28), it is said, that he was "in the beginning with God" (Jn., i: 1); was "equal with God" (Phil., ii: 6); "was God" (Jn., i: 1); having "all things whatsoever the Father hath" (Jn., xvi: 15); and "in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily" (Col., ii: 9). It is, of course, the glory of the Godhead and of Christ, that, though "very God of very God," he is subject to the Father. And just so, because it is the ordinance of infinite Wisdom, we may be perfectly sure that the glory of womanhood, and woman's equality with man, are somehow identified with subjection. That the sexes are equal in God's sight is explicitly stated. "There can be no male and female;" but all who are "in Christ" are equally heirs by faith of the promises of Grace (Gal., iii: 16, 28, 29).

(5) Headship and subjection are not merely important characteristics of the sex relation—they *are*

the sex relation, in so far as the Scriptures have declared it, the permanent and unchanging law that determines all social relations of men and women to each other in this world. Possibly the time will come when this principle shall cease to be operative—the time when they shall neither marry nor be given in marriage, but are “equal unto the angels” (Lk., xx: 34–36). Meantime it is the law by which the gospel distributes the duties and responsibilities of social life, not only in the domestic circle, but also in public. It is the germ of truth, destroyed by sin but restored by Christ, whose development and growth shall eventuate in the reconstruction of society in accordance with the divine idea, and free from the disorders consequent upon transgression. (For further discussion of this topic see chapter VII.)

II. The Symbol of the Sex Relation.

The apostle, having enunciated (vs. 3) the doctrine of the sex relation, proceeds to apply it (vs. 4–16), by showing how the radical difference between the sexes should be symbolized by them in connection with public religious exercises. He continues, “Every man praying or prophesying, having his head covered, dishonoreth his head. But every woman praying or prophesying with her head unveiled dishonoreth her head: for it is one and the same thing as if she were shaven” (vs. 4, 5).

The *occasion* for such legislation as this we know

not. It may have been in response to questions addressed to the apostle by letter or messenger (I Cor., vii: 1; II Cor., x: 9); to meet an innovation proposed by the refractory leaders of the Corinthian church (I Cor., xi: 16); or to correct an error already committed. We are entirely in the dark as to the occasion, save that Paul evidently anticipated opposition, and felt it necessary to be as explicit and emphatic as possible.

This uncertainty as to the occasion brings clearly to view the fact that there is nothing whatever in the passage to restrict the application of its precepts to the church meeting, or to any particular class of public assemblies. *Meyer* says, "There is no sign" that the "public assembly of the congregation, the whole church," is referred to (I Cor., xi, 5). He might have added, There is no sign that any church meeting is referred to. The women may have been conducting evangelistic services on their own account, as women do nowadays. There were plenty of women in Paul's day with abilities for such work, and they often appear as "laboring in the Lord" (Rom., xvi: 3, 4, 12; Phil., iv: 3). Phœbe was no doubt one of the active members of the Corinthian church when the first epistle was written to it, for less than two years later she was a deaconess of the church at Cenchrea, a seaport of Corinth, and the bearer of the epistle written *from Corinth* to the Romans (Rom., xvi: 1, 2). She and Priscilla had both probably been with Paul in his first Corinthian

ministry (Rom., xvi: 2-4; Acts, xviii: 2, 18), and the women of that church had thus had abundant precedent and encouragement for the largest development of their religious activities: for these are the two most active workers among the Christian women mentioned in the New Testament, and Prisea (Luke calls her Priscilla, or little Prisea) is definitely noticed before her husband in connection with teaching (Acts, xviii: 26).

The women of Corinth may have supposed it to be their privilege to lay claim for their sex to the right announced by Joel, and, for aught that appears to the contrary, they may have had apostolic encouragement to act upon such supposition. And their conduct may have been quite beyond criticism save in the single matter of laying aside the veil, and that, as we have seen, may have been prospective, and not actual. But whether the occasion for the apostolic ruling arose in the church meeting or in voluntary assemblies outside, and whatever may have been the facts that led to it, the requirement is general and has reference to all public praying and prophesying. Whenever women engage in such exercises they should wear the symbolic head-dress. When the apostle says (I Cor., xi: 16), "We have no such custom, neither the *churches* of God," he does not indicate that unveiling was specially forbidden in church meetings, but only that neither the apostles nor the churches founded by them could tolerate the practice anywhere.

Christianity is not to be committed to it. It is wrong under any and all circumstances, and irrespective of the question whether the praying or prophesying itself may on the particular occasion be right or wrong. That, of course, will be determined on other grounds.

"The apostle, by laying down for the woman the condition of wearing the veil, seems decidedly to authorize the act to which this condition applies; that is to say, *he permits the women to pray and to prophesy in public*" (Godet, I Cor., xi: 5). Many commentators hold this opinion, though a considerable proportion of them suppose it to be granted temporarily, and to be revoked in a later chapter (xiv: 34). We believe it is granted never to be revoked or modified. Paul here recognizes the right conferred by Joel, and illustrated on the day of Pentecost—woman's right to proclaim Christ publicly, that shall be characteristic of the Christian dispensation. It is impossible, even on natural grounds, that Paul should have been ignorant of this right, and incredible that he should not somehow have recognized it, when writing upon the same subject. He also includes public prayer, as something that might not, under all circumstances, be necessarily inferred from the right to prophesy.

In discussing the question of veiling we shall consider, first, the *nature* of the requirement in general; secondly, the matter of *form*, thirdly, the *perpetuity* of the obligation imposed.

I. Nature of the Duty.

(1) The Apostle declares that there is a marked significance attaching to whatever is worn upon the head in public assemblies; and that this meaning is precisely the reverse for men of what it is for women. The covered head signifies, with men *disrespect*, with women *respect*, for the "powers that be" above them. The man's head uncovered expresses respect; the woman's uncovered disrespect. The man expresses the same sentiment by the covered head that the woman does by the uncovered, and *vice versa* (vs. 4, 5).

Whether the ancients understood this symbolism does not appear. The custom was well settled. "Amongst the fashions of dress which admitted of no variation, was that which Greece (with the exception of Lacedæmon) retained in common with oriental nations generally, of women always appearing in public with their heads covered" (Stanley, I Cor., xi: Intr.). The Holy Spirit simply recognizes, explains, and confirms a prevalent usage, showing that it has its basis in nature, and that Christians ought to observe it in all their assemblies.

(2) There is a formal *ambiguity* in the use of the word "head." "Every man praying or prophesying, having his head covered, dishonoreth his *head*." Whether the head primarily referred to as dishonored is man's own head, or Christ his head, is not plain, and commentators disagree. The preferable opinion seems to be that it is Christ. "The

head of the man, in this respect of honoring or dishonoring, has been, vs. 3, explained to be Christ," says *Alford* (I Cor. xi: 4), in agreement with *Calvin* and *Godet*. *Ellicott* and *Stanley* suppose both ideas to be signified. And certainly the language is as appropriate to one as to the other, and there is no possible way of definitely excluding either idea. Noöne, moreover, would question that the man himself—his own head—is dishonored by any act of his that dishonors Christ; or (such is the wonderful vital oneness of the Vine and its branches) that in dishonoring ourselves we dishonor Christ. And if Christ, then also "the Father which sent him."

It is generally agreed that verse 10 conceives of the woman as under obligation to wear the "sign" of her subjection to the *man*. There is, therefore, at least a secondary expression of disrespect to man in laying aside the symbol of her relation to him. But if thus the woman expresses disrespect to man, her head, the disrespect extends to Christ who has made man head, and thus to God.

So in the last analysis, whatever the primary reference of the word may be, the honor or dishonor reaches to God the Father, the sovereign Head of all. And in either case it reacts with honor or shame upon the head of the one who renders it. The word "head" may be taken as meaning first "the head next above;" and secondly, every head in the scale from one's own physical member—or oneself—up to God the Father. It means every

head in the scale in any case. The ambiguity is formal, not real.

(3) The *doctrine of the passage* is, that the kingdom of God is a graded system of service, including the Deity and man; and that as to mankind, the gradation should be honored by both sexes, each bearing in its public ministries the symbol of its distinctive nature and calling—man the uncovered head, woman the covered. Men should bear the mark of their headship—their manhood; women the mark of their subjection—their womanhood. And that, in the particular grade of activity—prophesying—which announces the equality of the sexes; which characterizes them both and equally as the honored recipients of the supreme gift and grace of God; and by which man appears before his fellows as the divinely accredited representative and ambassador of God.

The right of women to prophesy is thus *qualified* by the duty of maintaining the emblem and reminder of what they are distinctively as women. Even the most honorable and most responsible public function of which they are capable—even that which proclaims their moral equality with men—does not excuse them from their womanhood and should not lead them to despise it. On the contrary, it should lead them to perceive that it is *as women* that they are honored, and that it is only as they maintain their distinctive character as women that any gift shall be wholly and truly hon-

orable to them. So *even while prophesying* they should wear the "veil"—symbol of man's headship; of their own helpmate calling.

But if they should thus be veiled while in the exercise of the supreme prerogative of either man or woman; if even that does not justify laying aside the symbol—then much less will any inferior prerogative justify it, and, as a matter of course, the veil should be worn by women as they sit silent in the assembly.

2. The *question of form* is not wholly or chiefly a question of form. It is a question of obedience, and as such is entitled to the most serious consideration of every reverent mind. What it is worth while for infinite Wisdom to enjoin, is deserving of all the time and strength it may require of finite creatures in the learning and observance of it. The command is, "Let her be veiled" (vs. 6). The question before us is, What is the precise duty imposed by the command? In answer we observe,

(1) The Greek verb corresponding to the terms "veiled" and "unveiled" in the revised version of this passage, is κατακαλύπτω *katakalupto*, meaning primarily to "cover up." In some of its forms it is appropriated to the idea of covering the head. This word is not derived from the name of some particular form of veil, and it does not designate veiling in a particular way. It is a compound of the primitive verb καλύπτω *kalupto*, meaning to "cover, conceal." It is a general term, appropriate to any method,

not only of veiling, but also of covering the head. Various garments were used on occasion as coverings for the head; and whatever the garment, and whatever the occasion or the method of using it, this word might be employed. It was not set apart exclusively to woman's use, but might also designate the covering of a man's head.

Thus we read in the *Odyssey* (8, 92), that Ulysses, "having covered his head," wept. This word was also used without any reference to the human head. In the *Iliad* (6, 464), Hector invokes the "heaped earth" to "cover me dead;" and we read (16, 325) of eyes "veiled" by darkness, and (17, 594) of a mountain "covered" with clouds. The same term is found in *Josephus* (*Antiq.*, vii: 10, 5) in the clause, "Now while the king covered himself," and lamented Absalom, etc. In the Septuagint, the noun derived from this verb appears as a name for the "coverings" of the tabernacle (*Ex.*, xxvi: 14).

There is nothing in the word that points to a particular manner of veiling. Indeed, the word veiling misrepresents the Greek, even in those forms of the verb that were specially appropriated to a covering for the head; for very often the head of woman was covered by a garment, as the palla, that could not by any means be regarded as a veil, but was rather a shawl; and it became a "veil" by being drawn up over the head, after a fashion common among the peasantry of modern Europe, and frequently seen also in this country. In such case

the *face* was mostly or entirely uncovered. And this reminds us that the apostle requires a "covering," or "veil," *not for the face, but for the head*. And the word employed by him does not necessarily include the face, or determine to what extent the head was to be covered. As *Bengel* says (*Gnomon*, I Cor., xi: 5), "How far the forehead, with the face, and the hinder part of the head, should be covered is a matter left to the customs of the people."

(2) The *custom as to veiling* in the first Christian century was probably about as definite and as easily described as the style of woman's head-wear in the nineteenth century, or for the last hundred years. The striking fact in our investigations is the near and obvious limitation of our certain information. The article *Vestis*, in Smith's Dictionary of Greek and Roman Antiquities, aims "to give a chronological sketch of the development of the costume of the latest periods" of classical antiquity, especially under the Empire. The writer says (2, 944), "Unfortunately it can only be a sketch, for the ground is for the most part new, there being no authoritative treatises on the subject." "Under the Empire, however, the Greek, or rather Hellenistic, fashions changed rapidly" (p. 945).

The article *Palla* gives the same general impression of uncertainty. The *palla* (*πεπλος peplos*), which under its Greek title Liddell and Scott define as "*any woven cloth* used for a covering, a *sheet, carpet,*

covering, veil," then as a "large full robe worn by women," is said to have been "sometimes drawn over the head to serve as a veil" (2, 317). It "might cover the face;" but it is "not to be regarded as merely a veil." Of the *palla* it is said (2, 314), "The actual modes of wearing dictated by fashion, or suggested by the needs of life, were truly endless, as were also the differences in size, material, and pattern, required to suit the wants of woman and girl, matron and maid, rich and poor, mourner and reveller, in all the varied pursuits and on all the many occasions which demand a special dress. These manifold uses are reflected in language, but the difficulty in determining what they were is increased by the fact that, as fashions changed and life became more complex, old words became obsolete or changed their meaning, while new words were applied to garments known formerly by other names."

Various other garments are mentioned that served as veils, as the *chlaina* or *pallium*, the *chlamys*, etc., some of them Greek, some imported from the Orient; but, amid the commingling of populations attendant upon Roman conquests and the movements of traffic, nothing was settled. There were no fixed styles of dress for any considerable extent of territory at any particular point of time, or for any great length of time in any given territory. The observations of writers relative to a particular time and place would be of

doubtful application to other times and places, and they were very liable to be partial and inadequate as to the general impression given of the time and place specially described. The customs of the Hellenistic period as to dress were characterized by the constant variation of old styles and introduction of new ones. And in view of this confusion, all we can be sure of relative to veiling is that the *head was covered somehow with some kind of a garment*.

But the face seems to have been generally uncovered, being as a rule so represented in ancient art. The strictness of orientals as to concealing the face was not so rigorous as it became later under Mohammedanism; and in the civilizations of Greece and Rome it was less than in the remoter East (Smith's Bible Dict., p. 3370). *Godet*, commenting on the words "we have no such custom, neither the churches of God" (I Cor., xi: 16), says, "The material proof of this assertion of Paul's is found in the Christian representations which have been discovered in the Catacombs, where the men always wear their hair cut short, and the women the palla, a kerchief falling over the shoulders, and which *can be raised* so as to conceal the face." The heads are covered, but not the faces, though the palla *might* be raised to cover the face—an adaptation not peculiar to the palla, and not specially indicative of Eastern usages.

(3) It is highly *improbable*, on general principles, *that the Holy Spirit stereotyped some particular*

style of woman's head-wear, and made it obligatory upon the Christian women of the time, or even upon the women of a single church, and much less upon Christian women forever. There is a presumption against such a view so strong that only the clearest and most unmistakable proof could avail to counteract it. It is not probable that the Almighty has laid the lines of some Greek milliner upon his church. If he has done such a thing, for reasons inscrutable to us, we must in reason expect that the written record of his will in the New Testament will exhibit a painstaking rebuttal of the adverse presumption and an unmistakably explicit delineation of the style elect. The exact form, size, and method of wearing must be particularly stated, for the same reasons that made such precision necessary in the description of the tabernacle and its contents (Ex., ch. 25 ff); and it is very doubtful if even this would have sufficed, in matters so ill-defined and variable as dress, without pictorial illustration.

The only ground upon which the adoption of a definite outward form, whether for a limited or unlimited time, may be supposed to rest is, that the form is in some way identified with fundamental truth, and is essential to the promulgation of it. The genius of Christianity is against the multiplication of forms. It proclaimed freedom to the Jew from an intolerable yoke of exact ritual observances (Acts, xv: 10), and announced that God is better pleased with a spiritual worship, a heart service.

But the unaided human reason will hardly be able to discover the exclusive fitness of any particular style of woman's veil to symbolize the sex relation. We can not suppose a style that might not be very slightly altered, as to size, form, and method of wearing, without affecting the symbolism. And then it might again be slightly altered in all these respects—and again—and again, and so on almost *ad libitum*. Between the practicable extremes of size, there is no limit to the variations of style that may thus be made without giving any apparent rational ground for supposing that the symbolism has been at all affected. It must, then, be a very distinct, detailed, and emphatic expression of the divine will that would establish the obligation to observe a particular style.

But, while the injunction as to veiling is sufficiently clear and emphatic, it is decidedly indefinite—nay, absolutely silent—as to forms and sizes and modes of wearing. We have seen that the Greek term is general, and that it applies with equal aptness to all fashions in “coverings” for the head. *Stanley's* preference for “bare headed,” instead of “unveiled,” as a translation of the word, illustrates the vagueness of the conception. We have seen also that contemporary history adds nothing to the cause of definiteness, but rather leads us still deeper into the uncertainties of multiplying variations. And we are compelled to the conclusion that any customary covering for the head satisfies the demands of the divine requirement.

It does not even appear that it must be customary, or that the apostolic prescription had any reference whatever to customary forms of head-wear, or to customary modes of wearing them. The Corinthian women might have obeyed the command perfectly by wearing some new invention of their own previously unknown in Greece or elsewhere. It was not a *style* of covering, or a *customary* covering, but a *covering*, that was required. Any device such as would naturally be worn to cover and protect the head, and which is not therefore insignificant as to size or from thinness of texture, satisfies the demands of the law. The wearing of the modern bonnet is as literal and as exact an obedience as ever Greek woman rendered by drawing her palla (cloak or shawl) over her head. Indeed, there is an element of adaptation and permanency in the use of the bonnet—a settled recognition of its function—that the Grecian garments generally or always lacked—a difference that marks the superior scripturalness of the modern article. In its possibilities of material, form, and artistic development also the bonnet is immeasurably in advance of the palla—a vastly more pleasing and appropriate symbol of the most beautiful of earthly relations.

(4) Certain *incidental intimations in the text* strongly favor the view that no particular style of head-wear is prescribed.

Man's turban, or hat, or whatever served to "cover" (vs. 4) or "veil" (vs. 7) his head, had the

same symbolism as woman's "veil," only reversed as to the times and circumstances of wearing. But the usual forms of men's head-wear were often quite different from women's (Smith's Bible Dict., pp. 618 ff; Smith's Dict. of Gr. and Roman Antiquities, Articles Vestis, Palla, Pallium, etc.). It is not, then, the form of the covering, but the fact that it is a covering, that determines the symbolism.

Again we read that, because of the essential nature of the sex relation (vs. 8, 9), the woman should "*have a sign of authority on her head*" (vs. 10). It is not *the* sign, but *a* sign that is required. The expression is indefinite. It might *possibly* have been so if spoken of a particular well-known "sign." But it is not very probable that the apostle would have spoken indefinitely while insisting upon a particular form, under circumstances presenting a strong antecedent probability against such particularity. And especially would he not when, as in the present instance, he is enforcing a duty against decided opposition (vs. 16; Studies on the Epistles, Godet, ch's iii and iv)—an opposition that would be only too glad to turn any such vagueness of statement to their own advantage and the apostle's discomfiture. The inference, therefore, is that the apostle employed an indefinite form of speech because the requirement is indefinite; because it is sufficient if the woman "*have a sign* of authority on her head."

This might also be argued from the fact that woman's long hair—the natural covering of her head—has the same symbolism as the "veil" (vs. 5, 6, 15).

The question of form, therefore, is a very thoroughly and satisfactorily settled question. There is absolutely not a ray of evidence that any particular form of head-wear, or anything that must be designated as a veil, is required. Veiling in the modern sense, and in so far as it implies covering the face, while not excluded, is not necessarily included, and is not definitely alluded to in this connection. The woman who wears her bonnet, or hat, is "veiled" in the exact sense of the term employed by the apostle. She is obedient to the letter and spirit of the command. When, in speaking of a man who stands hat in hand before the dead, we say he is *uncovered*, we express precisely the shade of meaning used by the apostle in forbidding women to pray or prophesy "unveiled." He meant they should have "a sign" of their sex worn conspicuously upon the head. For this the proof is overwhelming. For anything further than this there is no positive evidence at all.

3. The *perpetuity of the obligation* to wear the symbolic headdress is apparent from the permanency of the considerations upon which it is based. The reason for the command is in the nature of the sex relation—"the head of the woman is the man." She was created, not to an independent existence as a self-determining principal, but "for the man" (vs. 9) as his "help." This is her womanhood, her divine sphere of service; and, *because it is, she should acknowledge it to the world* by habitually

bearing upon her head the token of it. God, planning for the happiness and welfare of all his creatures, and specifically of women, has prescribed the wearing of the "sign" of their sex, not because of any transient or local considerations arising out of the customs or opinions of the society of the time, but because of the fact of sex itself. And the implication is that, since they should wear the "sign" *because* they are women, they should wear it *so long* as they are women. The obligation is as permanent as the reason, and the reason is *contained within* the divine law of the sex relation—the headship of man, the subjection of woman.

It is unquestionably true that, if we regard the subject from a rational, rather than scriptural, point of view, the reason involved in the Scripture statement of any divine precept is not complete. The moral universe, like the physical, is a unity; and, in the last analysis, the reason for any fact in either is to be found in the nature of every other fact, and in the marvelous interdependence and harmony of all. The human mind will labor in vain to sound the depths of the divine reason for any single act or doctrine of God's. The universe is too great, and its relations are too numerous, too far-reaching, and too recondite for the mind of man to grasp more than the beginnings of a knowledge of them. Hence the failure of Rationalism, and the world's need of a revelation. And hence Protestantism proclaims the Word of God to be our sole rule of

faith and practice, independently of reason and above all its deliverances. And hence, also, the reasons explicitly associated by God himself in the inspired page with the precepts he has given must control our thought and conduct. They are the immediate, great, and determining reasons; and all others, gathered by the unaided mind of man, must be subordinated, as we subordinate the human to the divine. The nature of the sex relation as a reason for veiling must take the precedence of custom and of all other extra-scriptural considerations. Otherwise Rationalism supplants the Word. But faith looks to the Word for guidance, and to reason for the apprehension and appropriation of the teachings of the Word, and for a tracing of the blessings that follow obedience, and the evils that come of disobedience.

It is also true that permanent principles are often embodied in transient customs. But it is not true that a custom is necessarily transient because it is the embodiment of a permanent principle; and not true that an observance is of transient obligation when the inspired writer places the reason for it in things that are permanent. Accordingly the critics generally recognize the permanence of the requirement as to veiling. *Godet* has expressed the truth most happily:—

“Was this conviction solely a matter of time and place, so that it is possible to suppose, that if he lived now, and in the West, the apostle would ex-

press himself differently? This supposition is not admissible. For the reasons which he alleges are taken, not from contemporary usages, but from permanent facts, which will last as long as the present earthly economy. The physical constitution of woman (vs. 13-15) is still the same as it was when Paul wrote, and will continue so till the renewing of all things. The history of creation, to which he appeals (vs. 8-12), remains the principle of the social state now as in the time of the apostle; and the sublime analogies between the relations of God to Christ, Christ to man, and man to woman, have not changed to this hour, so that it must be said, either that the apostle was wholly wrong in his reasoning, or that his reasons, if they were true for his time, are still so for ours, and will be so to the end" (I Cor., xi: 16).

How far modern usage has been directly and consciously deduced from this divine legislation can not of course be ascertained. Ultimately, no doubt, the voice of God in nature and in revelation have together determined the practice of the churches and of society, which, with some exceptions, is scriptural in this particular. *Stanley* (I Cor , xi: 1-15, Appendix) says, "The practical effect of this section on the customs of Christendom is well known. Whatever may have been its reception in the church of Corinth, the recommendation of the apostle has been so strictly observed in later times, that, in contradistinction to the practice

which prevails in Jewish synagogues and Mussulman mosques, no man would, as an ordinary rule, be found in a Christian place of worship with his head covered; no female with hers uncovered."

4. Wherein lies the *importance* of such legislation? Why should God lay so much stress upon so simple and so external a matter as women's wearing the "sign" of their sex? Why not enunciate the spiritual truths belonging to the relation, and leave the outward manifestations to adjust themselves? On this point we will again quote *Godet*:—

"One is tempted to ask as he reads the following sentences, why the apostle thinks it necessary to take things on so high a level, and to connect what is apparently so secondary a matter with relations so exalted as those of man with Christ, and of Christ with God. * * * It is likely enough, from verse 16, that the ultra-liberals of Corinth spoke with a certain disdain of the ecclesiastical prescriptions left by the apostle, and that in the name of the Spirit some claimed to throw his rules overboard. Paul would give them to understand that everything hangs together in one, both in good and in evil; that unfaithfulness to the divine order, even in things most external, may involve an assault on the most sublime relations, and that the pious keeping up of proprieties, even in these things, is an element of Christian holiness" (I Cor., xi: 3).

The value of symbols is not in their outward form,

but in that which they signify. The form suggests the spiritual truth, and is cherished not for its own sake, but for that. It is a wise law that requires our country's flag to be floated from every school-house: for its beautiful folds are radiant with lessons of patriotism. The ordinances of the Lord's house—baptism and the supper—are simple but constant and forcible reminders of the death and life of Him in whom we died to sin; in whom we live. The forms Christ has ordained are few, but their lessons are great. The very smallness of the number of the external observances, amid the mass of spiritual doctrine, attests their importance, as signs and conservatories of truth. And all history attests the fact that the symbols are the inspiration and rallying point of every cause that claims the allegiance of human minds and hearts.

The symbol of the sex relation has its value in the importance of the relation it signifies.

There is special reason at the present time for marking anew the significance of this particular sign. The heads are duly covered in every public assembly; but is there not reason to fear that the truth thus symbolized is being lost to view? The custom holds as prescribed, but the meaning is in danger of being forgotten. An era of liberation and of progress is always a time of peculiar dangers. Society, abandoning effete usages for better, is always in danger of forgetting that truth is old, as well as falsehood, and of unconsciously joining

the two in a common condemnation. The blows of the iconoclast often fall upon other objects than the images of an idolatrous faith—often even upon Him in whose name they are dealt, and upon the cause for which he died.

The last half century has been for women a time of deliverance and of blessing. Shall it result in their forgetting themselves and the law of Him who has blessed them? Some, indeed, affirm that modern Christian women are in no danger of a lack of fidelity to their office as helpmate. Strange infatuation! There never was an age when the danger was so great, or when so many were unfaithful. The dangers of today are not, like those of other times, in the depraved idiosyncrasies and eccentric sinfulness of individuals, but in the popularization of false and unscriptural doctrines as to the nature of the sex relation itself. The modern "equality" propaganda is not only not in harmony with the Scripture doctrine—it is a direct repudiation of it and of woman's office as helpmate. Proclaiming, not an equality in which man's preëminence in certain respects is offset by woman's in others; but one in which woman is declared man's equal where God has declared her unequal, namely, in authority: it pronounces the subjection of woman—the essence of the sex relation—to be an untimely survival from an age of superstition and darkness. Renouncing essential womanhood and wifehood, it undertakes to raise infidelity to mar-

riage into a principle of morals and of religion. Yes, there is great need of a "sign;" and greater need that the divine doctrine signified be again brought to remembrance and pondered by all who bear the name of Christ.

It is also important for us of this day to bear in mind, that characterizing a commandment of God as a "rule" or "custom," does not necessarily remand it to the limbo of the obsolete. For here is a command—that concerning veiling—which is obviously both a rule and the enforcement of a custom, but which also exhibits the marks of its divinity in that it "liveth and abideth."

CHAPTER V.

THE RIGHT DEFINED.

I Cor., xiv: 33-38—" (33) For God is not a God of confusion, but of peace; as in all the churches of the saints.

" (34) Let the women keep silence in the churches: for it is not permitted unto them to speak; but let them be in subjection, as also saith the law. (35) And if they would learn anything, let them ask their own husbands at home: for it is shameful for a woman to speak in the church. (36) What? Was it from you that the word of God went forth? Or came it unto you alone?

" (37) If any man thinketh himself to be a prophet, or spiritual, let him take knowledge of the things which I write unto you, that they are the commandment of the Lord. (38) But if any man is ignorant, let him be ignorant."

Here, according to the opinions of all the commentators we are acquainted with, is a virtual sentence of condemnation upon the doctrine we have announced in the preceding chapters. The "commandment of the Lord" (vs. 37) is apparently directed against the public prophesying of women. It inculcates "keeping silence" (vs. 34) and learning "at home" (vs. 35), and places a ban upon "speaking" (vs. 34, 35). So obviously does this seem to be a prohibition of all speaking in public assemblies that the critics, to whom we are wont to turn for light upon the meaning of the sacred words, are generally agreed in giving that interpretation,

and in bowing to a supposed necessity for imposing correspondingly narrow bounds upon Joel's doctrine of privilege.

We hope to show that this necessity is not altogether what it has been supposed to be, and that the text before us admits of and requires a slightly different treatment from what it has received—a difference that we are sanguine enough to believe will give an entirely new coloring to the Scripture doctrine as to women's prophesying. That the difference is slight, and that it does not bring us into collision with any of the authoritative dicta of textual criticism, will appear as we proceed.

Our discussion will naturally consider, first, the *doctrine* of the text; and, secondly, questions of *harmony*.

I.—Doctrine of the Text.

The text itself demands a remark. The last clause of verse 33—"as in all the churches of the saints"—is by many connected with verse 34, so that this would read,—“As in all the churches of the saints, let the women keep silence,” etc. *Meyer* says (I Cor., xiv: 34), “It is preferable to connect the clause with what follows, as is done by Cajetan and most modern expositors.” *Ellicott*, *Lange*, *Beet*, *Godet*, and others, concur in this opinion. In view of the probable correctness of this reading, the universality predicated by it of the practice of the first churches is worthy of note.

No special importance, however, attaches to this construction, and we shall not insist upon it.

1. *Speaking* is the thing *forbidden*. Says the apostle, "Let the women keep silence in the churches: for it is not permitted unto them to *speak*. * * * It is shameful for a woman to *speak* in the church."

Of all the dodging that has been done to evade the plain and obvious sense of these words; of all the baseless and ridiculous guesswork that has been forged against them, the merest mention would require a volume. It would be unprofitable to dwell upon the shameful spectacle, when the professed children of God thus pour contempt upon the expression of His holy will. We shall rather endeavor to interpret these words of our Savior (vs. 37), and to notice only those errors that have some plausibility or are supported by respectable authority. There is very little, however, to be said on such points. There is a remarkable unanimity of opinion among scholars as to the meaning of this passage, when considered apart by itself. There are no complex and difficult grammatical problems, no abstruse and doubtful terms or phrases. All is plain, direct, and simple. The difficulties arise chiefly in connection with questions of harmony, which will be considered in due order.

(1) The *meaning of the word "speak"* is plain and undoubted. In Greek it is *λαλεῖν lalein*. The meaning three or four hundred years before Christ,

or in classic Greek, was, "to talk, chat, babble, prattle" (Liddell and Scott's Greek Lexicon). But this meaning did not outlast those hundreds of years. Liddell and Scott's third definition of *lalein* is, "In late writers, just like *lego*, to speak." The New Testament is "late" Greek; and *lalein* in the New Testament never means "to babble," but always "to speak."

Robinson (New Testament Lexicon) defines *lalein* as meaning in the New Testament, in a general sense, "to speak, talk; properly, to use the voice, without any necessary reference to the words spoken." He continues, "As modified by the context, where the sense lies not so much in *lalein* as in the adjuncts," it has various shades of meaning, as "to teach, preach; tell, relate, declare; foretell; direct, charge, prescribe." "To babble" is not in the list. The following illustrations are given by *Robinson*. In Luke, v: 4, Jesus, after teaching the multitudes, "left *speaking*." In I Peter iv: 11, the exhortation is, "if any man *speaketh*," to speak "as it were oracles of God." The Judæan shepherds glorified God "that they had heard and seen, even as it was *spoken* unto them" by the angel (Lk., ii: 20). Peter (II Pet., i: 21) says, "No prophecy ever came by the will of man: but men *spoke* from God, being moved by the Holy Ghost." Jesus said to his disciples (Jn., xv: 11), "These things have I *spoken* unto you, that my joy may be in you." The word is *lalein* in each case.

Thayer (New Testament Lexicon) says, "Though in classic Greek *lalein* is the term for light and familiar speech, and so assumes readily a disparaging notion, in biblical Greek it is nearly, if not quite, free from any such suggestion."

Trench (Synonyms of the New Testament) declares that "all those contemptuous uses of *lalein*, as to talk at random, * * * may be dismissed and set aside." The distinctive meaning of *lalein*, he continues, "is the articulate utterance of human language, in contrast with the absence of this;" it is "to speak, as opposed to the remaining silent" (p. 275). So, when "God spake unto the fathers in the prophets" (Heb., i: 1), the word is *lalein*, because there is under consideration, not the nature of the truths delivered to the prophets, but the fact that God did speak, and did not keep silence. So, also, when the dumb demoniac was healed, the devil being cast out "the dumb man *spake*" (Matt., ix: 33). The word is *lalein*, because, as *Trench* says, "The evangelists are not concerned to report what the man said, but only with the fact that he, who before was dumb, was now able to employ his organs of speech."

Applying these principles to the case in hand, "It is not permitted unto them to speak" becomes tantamount to, "It is not permitted unto them to break silence." And we give the exact sense when we paraphrase the clause in verse 35 making it read, "It is shameful for a woman to utter a word

in the church." That means silence; and it would require silence even if the idea had not been otherwise expressed. But when it is also said, "Let the women keep silence," the possibility of mistaking the inspired conception is reduced to zero. The meaning is superfluously plain. As *Godet* says (I Cor., xi: 5), "What the passage forbids to women is not ill-speaking, or ill-timed speaking, it is *speaking*; and what Paul contrasts with the term speaking, is *keeping silence* or asking *at home*."

(2) The same conclusion follows, by a different line of thought, from the direction of verse 35—"If they would learn anything, let them ask" etc. They are not to ask *questions for information* in the church.

We can not infer from this that women *had* asked questions, and much less that they had "interrupted speakers" or "disturbed the order of the meeting." The case is hypothetical. "They might say, in answer to the former *keep silence*, 'But if we do not understand anything, may we not ask?'" (Alford, Greek Testament)? "The stress," says *Alford*, "is on *learn*." The women are supposed to be sincerely, earnestly, and modestly desirous of having their difficulties resolved. The answer is, Not by asking in the church meeting.

The true conception of this direction, according to *Meyer*, *Ellicott*, *Edwards*, *Godet*, *Stanley*, is expressed in the words of *Meyer*: "*Even questions*

for their instruction should not be brought forward by the women in the assemblies." *Godet*, as very often happens, gives the most complete and satisfactory exposition:—"The particle *ei de*, and *if*, which begins verse 35, introduces, not a simple explanation, but a gradation: 'and even if' etc. * * * The form *ei de* is therefore founded on the fact that questioning was the *case of least gravity*, the one that seemed most naturally to admit of exception. But this very exception Paul rejects." There is no exception, not even the least, to the rule that women may not speak in the church, is the idea of the apostolic prohibition.

(3) Prophesying and speaking with tongues are included in the prohibition.

The fourteenth chapter, though a continuation of the discourse on spiritual gifts beginning with chapter twelve, is a complete discussion by itself, concerned with a distinct phase of the subject, and isolated from chapter twelve by the intervention of chapter thirteen devoted to a different theme.

The great aim of the apostle in this chapter is to establish the superiority of prophecy to speaking with tongues. It is strictly a sermon on verses 28 to 31 in the twelfth chapter, with the first clause of verse 31 for a text—"But desire earnestly the greater gifts." This text is announced at the beginning of chapter fourteen—"Desire earnestly spiritual gifts, but rather that ye may prophesy."

Having announced his theme the apostle devel-

ops and illustrates it with constant reiteration, showing that prophecy is calculated to instruct and edify the church, while speaking with tongues is not. And by prophecy he means speaking for God in the vernacular, or so as to be understood. And it need not be always formally didactic discourse; but even prayer, singing*, and giving of thanks (vs. 14-19), if in the assembly and in the language of the hearers, are a speaking for God *to men*. That is, they are social, and not solitary, exercises; and they should therefore lead the minds of the hearers into right conceptions of God, and into right relations to him—they should edify. The aim and method of every exercise that finds a legitimate place in the church meeting should thus be those of prophesying. Indeed, every such exercise should *be* prophesying, because every form of speech that communicates a message from God to the understanding of men is prophesying. Edification is the aim, and speaking divine truth so as to be understood is the method of prophesying; and the superiority of such discourse to every other for the church meeting is the theme of the major part of this fourteenth chapter. This uninspired gift is what Joel says all of God's people shall have in later times. Paul reiterates in various ways the truth that this is the best gift for the church meeting; and in summing

* The singing above referred to is apparently an individual exercise, perhaps the rendering of a "psalm" (vs. 26) or other selection from the Old Testament Scriptures.

up the teaching of the chapter in the last two verses (39, 40), he says, "Wherefore, my brethren, desire earnestly to prophesy, and forbid not to speak with tongues. But let all things be done decently and in order." Evidently, prophesying and speaking with tongues have been under consideration throughout the chapter.

The *immediate context* of the law of silence (vs. 26-38) points in the same direction. This treats of the order to be observed both by those who prophesy and by those who speak with tongues. All should speak in turn, or one by one. Those who have a "tongue," however, are commanded, "if there be no interpreter" present, to "keep silence in the church," vs. 28, and to "speak to himself, and to God." The prophets also are directed, if one is speaking, and some new views of gospel truth are "revealed" to another sitting by, in due time let him speak, but "let the first [then] keep silence," vs. 30: for the prophets *can* control themselves and speak one at a time and in due deference to "heaven's first law," vs. 31-33. Then, vs. 34, 35, follows the direction relative to women. And then immediately, vs. 37, the apostle addresses the "prophets and spiritual," requiring their submission to his decree, as to the "commandment of the Lord." Certainly, the prohibition of speaking and the requirement of silence is thrown into such a context for a purpose. What purpose, if not to show that prophesying and speaking with tongues are both included within the scope of its teaching?

Alford, accordingly, includes verses 34 and 35 in the title to the last section of the chapter (Gr. Test., I Cor., xiv: bef. vs. 26), which is, "Regulations respecting the exercise of spiritual gifts in the assemblies." *Edwards* observes (I Cor., xiv: 34), "In xi: 5 the apostle permits women to pray and prophesy in the assembly under certain restrictions. The discussion of the gift of tongues seems to have led him to withdraw even that limited permission." *Olshausen* says (I Cor., xiv: 34), "Women who were possessed of the gifts * * * alone can be intended." *Calvin*, *Schaff*, and all who hold the postponement theory of reconciling chapter 14 with chapter 11, include the gifts in the prohibition, as do many others.

The practical significance of including the "gifts" in the prohibition of women's speaking is found in connection with the miraculous gift of tongues. If women are merely not to prophesy, the question might arise if the prophetic gift may not at times revert sufficiently near to the original inspired type to constitute an exception to the rule, and to justify a departure from the law of silence. The reasoning would be, "Of course all ordinary speaking is forbidden, because all uninspired speaking for God to men is prophesying, and prophesying is forbidden, but we can not suppose that a law laid down for ordinary prophesying will hold for the extraordinary or miraculous: for those who have a special and miraculous impulse of the Spirit are above all

rules." Paul answers this reasoning by declaring that even the miraculous gifts are amenable to the rules which the Spirit has laid down through him. The very gift of tongues, which has not the shadow of a foundation in nature, and which is wholly miraculous, is banished from the assemblies altogether, save on one condition (vs. 28). The fact that it is miraculous does not raise it above apostolic rules. The divine precept that applies to the ordinary gift applies also to the extraordinary. The inference is obvious:—If prophecy of the miraculous type were ever again to be bestowed on men, it also would be subject to the rules imposed on the ordinary gift. The Corinthians with all their gifts, ordinary and miraculous, were to observe the rules. The rules are the divine order of Christian service to which all gifts must conform; in view of which all gifts are bestowed.

2. The *reason* for the silence of women in the church is in their subjection—in the essential nature of the sex relation. "Let them be in subjection, as also ^{as} with the law" (vs. 34).

The subjection that requires silence is not that which was imposed by the usages and sentiments of society in the first century. There is no reference to the demands of any human society. The subjection in question is that which the law of Christ in the New Testament enunciates, and which the Old Testament "also" speaks of. The particular part of "the law" referred to is generally supposed to be

Gen. iii: 16—"He shall rule over thee." This is undoubtedly correct (See I Tim., ii: 11-14), but we prefer to look a little further, and to find the primary reference in the doctrine of creation, that woman was made as a "help" (*Ibid*). But in either case the teaching is, that women are to be silent in the churches because of a relation that not only is now, but ever has been since the beginning of human history; and, on the other hand, ever will be so long as the world shall stand. Nothing could more clearly indicate the permanence and universality of this divine precept; nothing more plainly show its absolute and eternal independence of all merely transient and local considerations. The reason is permanent and unchanging, and therefore the law abides, the same forever. "Most biblical scholars" have held this view. And while there are signs of a disposition on the part of recent critics to find some grounds for an enlargement of woman's prerogative of speech; there are no signs whatever, so far as we can discover, that they are wavering in their conviction as to the permanence of the obligation imposed by this command. The latest and best—*Meyer, Godet, Alford, Ellicott, Stanley, Schaff, Hodge*, etc.—are unanimous in their opinions on this head. They differ as to precisely what the requirement is, some supposing it to refer only to the more public assemblies; but all agree that it is permanently binding on all women.

Although this doctrine as to the law of silence is

plain, and although the critics and commentators have accepted it as unimpeachable for the whole period of church history; it becomes necessary at this point, on account of a popular revolt against it, to notice certain specious but fallacious reasoning directed mainly against the scriptural grounds of the restriction. We shall consider the argument from *custom*; that from the *spirit* of Scripture teaching; and that from the divine method of government by *principles rather than by rules*.

(1) The argument from *custom*. It is variously stated. Its ablest advocates are careful to maintain an apparent regard for the permanent principle of subjection upon which the command is based. The idea is, that subjection ought always to be honored, and that in the apostle's day the state of public sentiment was such as to make speaking in promiscuous assemblies a violation of subjection; but that, with public sentiment as it is now, such speaking is no violation of subjection, and is permissible. The advocates even think to turn the tables upon the critics by averring that it may at times be even more an expression of subjection for a timid woman to yield and speak than to maintain silence. But, in general, when society is opposed it is a violation of subjection for women to speak; but, when society is favorable, submission and speaking go together, so that a woman may speak and yet be subject. This view is stated as follows by one who holds it:—

"The subjection of women to their own husbands was a permanent *principle* of supreme importance in human relations, and to be conserved for the glory of God. Women keeping silence in churches was not another permanent principle lying alongside of the subjection; but it was a *custom* to be used as long as requisite to subserve the 'subjection,' and to be cast off as an old garment is shed when no longer needed for its original purpose" (St. Paul and Woman, Love, p. 24.)

There are various objections fatal to this view. It is not demonstrated or demonstrable that the customs of the apostolic age were so uncompromisingly against women's speaking as imperatively to require the conformity of the churches. On the day of Pentecost a multitude of Jews were easily conciliated (Acts, ii: 16-18). The Old Testament led the Jews as a people to expect that women would prophesy in later times (Joel, ii: 28); and in the first Christian century there were many active and influential women among them (Josephus, Ant., xvii: 2, 4; Farrar, Life and Work of Paul, i: 488). The Greek and Roman religions also had their priestesses and prophetesses (Conybeare and Howson, Life and Epistles of St. Paul, ch. xvi: p. 432). The idea of women's prophesying was not unheard of or intolerable to the peoples of that age. There were Christian prophetesses in those days (Acts, xxi: 9; I Cor., xi: 5); and when, in Corinth, the question arose as to their exercising their gift in the

public assemblies of the church, the difficulty was, not that there was so much opposition, but that the sentiment of the church was so *favorable*. They evidently had no trouble with the adverse customs and sentiments of the time; and if their practice had been inherently right, the Corinthians might safely have been left to themselves, and the result would have been a gradual victory of that large and growing church over the prejudices and opposition of the heathen society around about them.

Again, Christianity was not wont to renounce justice and the promises of God simply because the heathen had to be pleased; and especially not in its own internal arrangements. It might *wait* for the fulfillment till the fulness of time had come; till the gospel had melted adverse barriers down; but it never could renounce and forbid anything which God had expressly granted as one of the greatest and best of the Spirit's blessings.

Moreover, the Holy Spirit knew how to issue commands conditional on circumstances (I Cor., vii: 26; x: 27, 28; xiv: 28, 30); and we must suppose that infinite Wisdom has given the command enjoining silence the character it was intended we should find in it and be governed by. If the practice of speaking had been inherently right we would not have had a total prohibition that would deceive all the critics for eighteen hundred years, and leave the truth to be guessed at at last against the conclu-

sions of all the ablest thinkers, and against the obvious import of the text.

But the most fatal fault of this theory is, that it is *not scriptural*. Paul said that woman should be silent because of their subjection—because of their place in the sex relation. In other words, because they are women. It is not because of womanhood plus custom, but because of womanhood alone, and in its permanent and essential nature. It makes no difference when she lives, or where, or what the customs are—she is a woman still; subject still, precisely as God made Eve subject; precisely as Christ requires all women to be subject. It is *essential womanhood* that requires silence in the church. So says the Scripture.

But the advocate of women's speaking says it is womanhood *plus custom*. He adds custom to the reason for silence—an element that he finds, not in Scripture, but in his own brain. It is hypothesis pure and simple. And why should such an hypothesis be made? Because *Reason* tells us that the restriction upon women is no longer needed for the maintenance of the true relations of the sexes, and must therefore somehow be shown to be obsolete. The *necessity* for avoiding the precept arises in a judgment of the human reason; and the *means* employed in effecting the avoidance—the hypothesis that custom belongs to the grounds of the precept—is a device of the human reason. The whole argu-

ment from custom, both in its justification and in its methods, is rational and not scriptural. It is not interpretation—not an unfolding of the meaning of the sacred text. It is a discarding of it because of considerations arising, not in the Word itself, but in reason. It is the newest development of the old warfare of rationalism against Christian faith and obedience, with rationalism in the ascendant. The situation is, if we do not understand the scope and beneficence of a divine precept we will annihilate it with an hypothesis.

But the argument from custom is supposed to be a true argument; true interpretation. Why is it not?

The fallacy is what the logicians would characterize as the “ambiguous middle.” It is illustrated in the following syllogism:—

“A pitiful man is beneath respect;

“Howard, the philanthropist, was a pitiful man;

“Therefore, he was beneath respect” (Tappan, *Elements of Logic*, p. 380).

Here the word pitiful is the middle term that contains the ambiguity. It is used in two very different senses. In the major premise it means *contemptible*—“A contemptible man is beneath respect.” In the minor premise it means *compassionate*—“Howard, the philanthropist, was a compassionate man.” The result of using the word in these two senses is the false conclusion that

Howard was beneath respect. Take another syllogism:

Because silence is synonymous with subjection, women should be silent;

On account of a change of customs, silence is not now synonymous with subjection;

Therefore women may now speak.

In the first of these statements, the major premise, the word subjection, or middle term, is by common consent used to designate the permanent and unchanging *sex relation*. The advocates of women's speaking assert that it has the same meaning in the second statement, or minor premise. But that is a logical impossibility. It means, rather, the *custom of subjection*, or the ideas and usages as to the sex relation that are prevalent at the present time. These, of course, are different from those that prevailed in the apostle's day; and the advocates of women's speaking, not realizing that they have ceased to regard the *essential sex relation* as the reason for silence, suppose that the change of customs justifies their opinions and the modern practice. Their conclusion is precisely as true and logical as that above, that Howard was beneath respect, and for the same reason—an ambiguity of meaning in the middle term.

It must be self-evident to any rational mind that if a change of customs can affect the permanence of a divine precept, it is because the precept was founded in the first place, in part at least, upon

custom. Silence must have been founded, either upon subjection alone, thus—

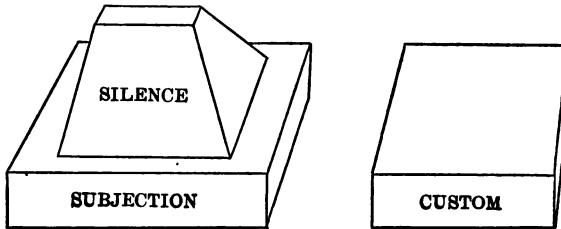


Fig. 1

or upon subjection plus custom, thus—

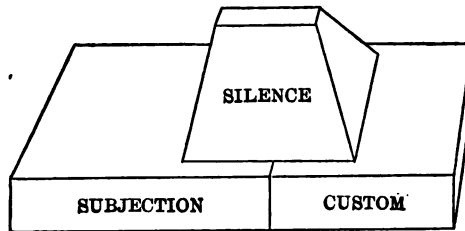


Fig. 2

But if the law of silence was founded on the eternal relation of sex—upon subjection—and upon that alone; then any change in that side issue of custom (Fig. 1) will not affect it so much as would the blowing of the evening zephyrs. The law—silence—will stand so long as the foundation—subjection; the essential sex relation—remains intact, that is, forever.

And on the other hand, if any change in the customs of society can affect the stability of the law of

silence, it is, it must of necessity be, because the law was established in the beginning wholly or in part upon custom (Fig. 2). If it had not been built upon custom, a change in custom would not affect the stability of it. The foundation of the law in this case is subjection plus custom, or subjection as affected by custom. In other words, it is subjection as believed in and observed by the people of the time, or subjection *as* a custom. And is it not self-evident that those who use this argument from custom, while professing and supposing themselves to regard subjection alone as the original reason for silence, do in fact actually always couple it with custom, making custom a part of the original reason. They seem to be unable to grasp the idea that subjection alone contains the reason for the law. Unconsciously to themselves they have added custom to the scriptural reason, and have thus been betrayed into a ridiculous logical blunder—the ambiguous middle—the forming of a syllogism in which the word subjection is used in two distinct and incompatible senses, the result being that there is no true argument and no legitimate conclusion.

But at this point in our discussion we may resolve the argument from custom into another and still simpler logical fallacy—the *petitio principii*, or begging of the question. The question at issue really is, Does a change of customs affect the validity of the law of silence? The answer of those

who use the argument from custom,—an answer not reasoned out, but *assumed* by this unconscious change in the meaning of the word subjection,—is, Yes, silence was enjoined in view of prevalent customs, and may therefore cease to be obligatory as customs change. The change in the idea of subjection—the change from the essential sex relation to the custom of subjection—since it is made unconsciously and against the professions and conscious intentions of those who make it, is plainly pure assumption. But this is the very thing at issue—this question whether custom enters into the reason for silence. It is the point above all others that should be established by irrefragible proof. But not one particle of proof is offered. The necessity for proof is quietly overlooked, and the relevancy of custom taken for granted. It is through this begging of the question at issue that the ambiguity in the middle term of the syllogism, as above noticed, arises; and thus the fundamental fallacy of those who employ this argument from custom is the *petitio principii*.

The plausibility of the idea that silence is a transient custom embodying the permanent principle of subjection, is due, no doubt, to the fact that permanent principles are often embodied in transient customs, just as they are constantly embodied in single isolated actions. The law of silence *might* have been a case of this kind; and it would have been if the Spirit had seen fit to place the reason

for it in custom, or in any other transient consideration. But it is not, because the reason is permanent; and it is evidently the divine intention that the law shall stand till the reason for it passes away.

“ Let those who would remove this limitation of silence from women grapple with the reasons given for it by the inspired apostle. To avoid them, and to talk—however learned and truly—about changes in the customs of the age and the countries in which Paul lived and labored, is as relevant as to talk about the changes of the moon, and not a whit more so. It avails nothing to descant upon changes in something upon which something nothing whatever has been founded. The prohibition of the apostle is not built upon the sand of custom, shifted hither and thither by the waves of time; but on the rock of man’s creation and fall, which nothing can change or destroy. It is, then, not only idle, but silly in the extreme, to say that the sand has shifted since Paul founded his prohibition upon the rock ” (Rev. A. H. Ross, in Bib. Sac., Vol. 27, p. 341).

We think it is worse than silly—it is a revolt of the human reason against the authority of God. It is Rationalism doing its best to smite down the Word of God and the faith of the church.

We have seen that the usages of society had no part in the inspired reason for silence. We shall shortly discover that the requirement of silence was *never at any time the enforcement of prevailing*

usages, but the enactment of a rule of comparatively narrow scope, which left women even then at liberty to speak in public assemblies in defiance of the custom, as they may have done in Corinth (I Cor., xi: 5), and certainly were not censured for doing.

(2) The argument from the *spirit* of Scripture teaching holds that, because we serve in the freedom of the spirit and not in bondage to the letter of the divine law, therefore women may be excused from the law of silence, provided they are careful to exercise their prerogative of speech in a temper of mind and by methods befitting their subject state.

But the Corinthians served Christ in the same freedom of the spirit that we do; yet no one supposes that their women were excused from a literal obedience. And why should ours be? At what period in the history of Christianity, and by what means, has it come to pass, that the Christian's freedom gives him the option to do or not to do the very things the law of Christ prescribes? And is it true to-day that, when Christ commands his followers to do a particular thing, they, by virtue of their spiritual freedom, are able to obey equally well by doing that particular thing or by doing precisely the opposite? If the command is to cover the head, may they render a perfect and acceptable obedience indifferently by covering the head or by leaving it uncovered? And when

Christ commands women to be silent in the church, are they at liberty, because they are free, to be silent or the opposite of silent at their pleasure? If not, what is the pertinence of this talk about the freedom of the spirit? If yes, why were the commands given?

But Christian freedom is not freedom *from* doing the requirements of Christ, but freedom *in* doing them.

"Why call ye me Lord, Lord, and *do not the things which I say?*" said Christ (Lk., vi: 46). And he straightway declared that such a life is as a house without a foundation, that will not stand the test, but in the flood becomes an irremediable ruin (vs. 49). The freedom of the spirit is the glorious life they have whose obedience is not in external observances *alone*. They are not slaves, because their heart's first love and choice is to do the Savior's will, and to delight in what he has chosen for them.

The spirit of Scripture teaching, and not less of the New Testament than of the Old, is that the disciple should do the will of the Master from a heart of love. And love is the severest of taskmasters. He who serves God from love serves with the most rigorous exactitude. Love cherishes with superfluous painstaking the slightest intimation of the beloved Sovereign's will. And the spirit of Christian obedience is the spirit of Christian love. It may not always be able to do the precise thing

required; but it will do its best, and grieve if unable to render a literally perfect service. An obedient spirit finds in the commandments of Christ the utterances of an infinite and unsearchable wisdom, inspired by infinite love, for the right and wise and safe direction of our lives; and it responds with unceasing thanksgiving and praise to God for the goodness that has so wondrously permitted us to *know* what these best things are, and to know them as divinely attested. And it seeks to give expression to its gratitude by gathering them up with scrupulous care and making them the practical blessing to ourselves and to all mankind that God intended them to be in granting them to us. It would strive with infinite pains to be conformed to every slightest expression of God's will because it is God's will; and would shrink with loathing and abhorrence from the moral turpitude that could break even "one of the least of these commandments and teach men so." And as for fabricating hypotheses to justify doing the very thing forbidden, it would surely find in that the spirit of *disobedience* and of rebellion against God. Let us be sure that such it is, and purge ourselves from it as from the leaven of death.

(3) The right of women to speak in the church is argued also upon the ground that the government of God is by "sublime *principles* of conduct," rather than by "precise *rules*."

This is a question of fact; and the fact is that

God has some rules as well as some general principles. To assert that the gospel has only general principles, one must resort to the gospel of his own imagination, rather than to the gospel as found in the New Testament.

We may accept the command to "love one another" as a principle. That is, it is a rule of extensive application, adapted to a great variety of circumstances, and requiring intelligence, tact, and a Christian spirit to determine what particular acts or lines of action are called for at particular junctures. But "let her be veiled" when "praying or prophesying," is a rule as precise as it will be found practicable to make a rule. And "Let the women keep silence in the churches," is another just as precise. It assigns a specific duty to a specific occasion. There is just one thing to do at a particular time, and that one thing the command states explicitly.

While, therefore, it is in general true, as Robertson says (Century Dictionary, Def. of Principle, at end), that "Christianity is a set of principles, not a set of rules;" it is not true that there are *no* rules. The rules are few; but to a person whose opinions are formed, not from *a priori* notions of what ought to be, but from a conscientious consultation of the facts of Scripture teaching, it will be found as easy to deny the existence of principles, as to assert that there are no rules. It has been said, and it is true—as true in biblical interpretation as in the

physical sciences—that a single fact will overturn any number of theories incompatible therewith. But in the inspired direction as to "veiling" and in that enjoining "silence in the churches," we have two facts proving beyond peradventure that there are rules in the New Testament—rules of permanent and universal application.

This distinction between principles and rules is of no practical use and is out of place in the discussion of women's speaking. What matters it whether a commandment of God is generic or specific in its requirements? The duty of obedience attaches to both equally—the duty of doing the thing or things required. And obedience requires of us that we accept the commands, with the character God has stamped upon them, as the finality of sovereign Wisdom for our guidance. To assert that a command upon which God has fixed the character of particularity to the last detail is a principle admitting of variable applications, is asserting that which is *prima facie* false, and which can be made respectable only by convincing proof. But that the law of silence is a principle no proof but bare assertion has ever been proffered. And for the excellent reason that the case admits of no other.

But, on the other hand, those divine commands which we characterize as principles are thoroughly misconceived unless they are regarded as precise and specific in their requirements. When God says

we should "love one another," he does not refer primarily to the ten thousand acts in which love may find expression; but to one thing alone—the state of heart that we should cultivate. And just so every divine command, however far-reaching in its ultimate practical bearings, imposes primarily but a single simple duty. There is a very true sense in which every Scripture precept is a rule. And in the mind and heart of the obedient Christian there will be a singleness of response, and not very much hair-splitting about the differences between the commands, and especially not with a view to evading the requirements. He will find in rules and principles alike an expression of the Love that is the Law of his heart, and to both equally he will respond with the painstaking particularity of a divinely filial sonship. There will be a more perfect result in the one case than in the other, owing to the simplicity and ease of the practical observance of the rule. But that does not excuse us from attaining as nearly as may be to perfection in both cases. And to assert, as those who use this argument from general principles do virtually assert, that because a complete obedience to the principles of religion is not to be found in any specific line of action, therefore we are justified in throwing the rules overboard and doing precisely the opposite of what they require, is, to say the least, to take a stand pointedly illogical in itself, and decidedly at variance with the teachings of the New Testament.

These various arguments against the literal observance of the apostolic precept owe whatever of plausibility they may seem to possess to three principal considerations:—First, to the predisposition of those who employ them to believe them true; secondly, to a vague generality in the statement and application of them; and, thirdly, to the fact that there is a large element of truth in some of them, which, from not being relevant to the matter in hand and being forced into a false relation, is made an apology for that which is false. The first of these is, we think, the great and fundamental fault of all. Our experience tells us that, with very few exceptions, the advocates of woman's speaking in the church are not rational in their interpretation of the text at the head of this chapter. They are not open-minded and ready to welcome truth. Their minds are already made up. They are actuated (and let the conscience of the community bear witness) by a desire and determination that a commandment of Christ which has been definitely discarded in practice shall somehow be silenced. Having no real reasons to allege against it, they gladly accept almost anything that pretends to be an explanation, though absurdity is branded all over it. The three lines of argument we have noticed are among the best proposed, and not one of them has an inch of ground to stand upon. The *predisposition to believe the law of silence obsolete* is a settled determination defiant alike of facts and logic, of the authority of

Christian scholarship, and even, it almost seems, of God himself. It is the chief bulwark of the modern practice.

The true attitude of the Christian toward this, as toward every divine command, is readiness of welcome for its real meaning, uncompromising loyalty, and unflinching advocacy. The Christian spirit can not tolerate the thought of even seeming to ignore and disregard a word of God, and much less of seeming to tamper with it and explain it away. We can not rightly treat the Scriptures as we would treat the tricks of a political adversary. We must assume their inviolate sanctity, and receive whatever goes to qualify or avoid their apparent meaning with suspicion and distrust. And especially should this be our attitude toward the commandments, which are presumably the simplest and most easily comprehensible of all the teachings of Scripture, being, as they were evidently designed to be, a plain rule of life for plain people.

If this were our spirit; if we were as zealous to vindicate as some are to destroy the command, is there any obvious reason why we may not give heed to its literal requirement with the assurance that we are following the leading of a hand divine? Can the servant of Christ, who stands, backed by eighteen centuries of Christian scholarship, upon the *exact phrasing of the Spirit*, have any very serious doubts as to his obedience, or be haunted by any harrowing sense of insecurity, because of the vague

generalities of these latter-day assaults upon the doctrine of that phrasing? It is impossible. He is a good deal more surely with Christ than he would be if rejecting those words for vastly better reasons than have ever yet been alleged against them. He may not be able to reconcile all of the apparently clashing statements of Scripture, or to establish harmony between the Word and the apparent needs of Christian work; but he knows that he is following the best light he has—knows that he is true to the Law God has given to guide him. And, knowing this, he can wait and watch with confidence for the better light that is needed, and for all good that is implied in the blessing of God upon the faithful.

Because this is so; because the assault upon these words of Christ is not made *necessary* by our loyalty to the Word as a whole, and to Christ's will and work; therefore it is unjustified and unjustifiable by any Christian principle. It is a rash departure from that jealousy for God which ought to characterize every disciple. It is a manifestation of the spirit of disobedience in that it is *more ready to find reasons for not doing, than reasons for doing* the very thing prescribed. It is the spirit of him who, foolishly thinking the ark of God to be in danger (II Sam., vi: 6), forgot the law (Numb., iv: 15), and the watchcare of God over his own (I Sam., ch's v and vi); forgot the doom of those who had profanely touched the holy things (I Sam., vi: 19, 20), and

stretched out the sacrilegious hand to render a forbidden service. It had been better for Uzzah to obey, and to allow the ark to fall into the hands of Him who had cared for it in hostile lands and restored it to his people. And it will be better for us of to-day to leave the practical needs of the church in the keeping of its King, than to seek to further them by laying violent hands upon his holy law.

3. The *sphere of the prohibition is in the church meeting*. This will appear from the following considerations:—

(1) The *primary reference in the context* is to the social-religious church meeting.

The exercises referred to throughout the fourteenth chapter are *religious*. We have seen that the entire chapter is devoted to a discussion of the various "spiritual," or religious, speaking gifts by which meetings for edification are to be maintained. All are included in two—speaking for God in one's own language, and speaking in a foreign language—prophesying and speaking with tongues. Under either species of discourse there might be several varieties, as prayer, singing, giving of thanks (vs. 14–19), or formal address adapted to edify (vs. 5, 13, 27). Under the head of prophesying, mention is made of "revelation," "knowledge," "prophesying" (in the stricter sense as distinguished from other gifts in the vernacular), and "teaching" (vs. 6, 26). All these terms refer to religious discourse, and not at all to "business" matters. And

in its details, as in the general theme, the chapter alludes to nothing else whatever but the distinctively religious gifts and exercises.

A *social* meeting is described in this chapter, not a meeting for preaching, or for the observance of the Lord's Supper. The various religious gifts are exercised, not by a pastor, but by the laymen speaking in turn by the way of volunteer contributions. "When ye come together, *each one* hath a psalm, hath a teaching, hath a revelation, hath a tongue, hath an interpretation" (vs. 26); "If any man speaketh in a tongue, let it be by two, or at the most three, and that in turn; and let one interpret" (vs. 27); "And let the prophets speak by two or three" (vs. 29); "For ye all can prophesy one by one" (vs. 31).

This meeting, social and religious, was a *meeting of the church*. The epistle was written to "the church of God which is at Corinth" (I Cor., i: 2)—to the visible company of Christ's disciples gathered in the Greek metropolis. Paul addresses them as "brethren" (I Cor., xiv: 6, 20); and in speaking of the meeting, he says (vs. 26), "What is it then, brethren? When ye come together," etc. This is the company of people who are to be "edified," or built up spiritually, by the various exercises of the meeting. So the exhortation, as to the choice of gifts and the order to be observed, is, "Let all things be done unto edifying" (vs. 26); and "Seek that ye may abound unto the edifying of the church"

(vs. 12). It is to a meeting of this body that reference is made in the words, "If therefore the whole church be assembled together, and all speak," etc. (vs. 23). That the presence of "unbelievers" is spoken of as merely a possible contingency (vs. 23, 24), shows that the membership of the church alone is essential to the normal composition of the assembly.

The meaning of the word "church," and of the Greek term *ekklēsia* translated church, confirms this opinion. These words have throughout the fourteenth chapter just two meanings. *Ekklesia* meant primarily assembly; but it was adopted by the Lord and his apostles in a more limited sense, as a name exactly corresponding to our word church. It is used by Christ as the English word is by us, as a name for the whole company of the redeemed—the universal invisible church (Matt., xvi: 18); but in the New Testament it is generally employed as a name for the *local company* of Christ's professed followers who worship together in one place, as the church in Corinth (I Cor., i: 2), or for the *meetings* of that body. In the fourteenth chapter of First Corinthians it occurs in these last two senses mainly if not exclusively. The places where it is found are as follows:—

"He that prophesieth edifieth the church" (vs. 4); the speaker with tongues should "interpret, that the church may receive edifying" (vs. 5); "Seek that ye may abound unto the edifying of the

church" (vs. 12); "In the church I had rather speak five words with my understanding, that I might instruct others also, than ten thousand words in a tongue" (vs. 19); "If therefore the whole church be assembled together" (vs. 23); "If there be no interpreter, let him keep silence in the church, and let him speak to himself and to God" (vs. 28). Of these passages verses 19 and 28 evidently refer to the *meeting* of the church; verse 23 specifies the body of disciples called the church; and the remaining three verses may designate either the church or the church meeting.

There is, therefore, nothing in the use of the word "church," as it occurs in the chapter, that is inconsistent with the idea that the church meeting is primarily under consideration throughout. Indeed, that is the only explicit and obvious reference of the word. If there is in the term edifying a suggestion of the universal church, it is incidental and remote. And we are justified in concluding that the context of the prohibition of women's speaking has not only a primary, but even an exclusive, reference to the social-religious church meeting. If any other class of assemblies, religious or secular, are referred to in the prohibition itself, it is not because the context requires it.

While, therefore, in the command, "Let the women keep silence in the churches," the word "churches" is the same that in Greek is used as the common designation of any public assembly;

and while it is occasionally used in this sense in the New Testament (Acts, xix: 32)—the context in the fourteenth chapter of First Corinthians plainly shows that here the word is employed in a much more restricted sense, namely, as signifying primarily, at least, the social-religious church meeting, now commonly called the church prayer-meeting. Because this is the meaning in the context, and because the context is closely linked in thought with the text of the prohibition, we may fairly infer that this meaning is found in the text. This is linguistic usage. Words having many senses are constantly employed by us in some one particular sense; and the context and connection alone furnish the clue which enables us to ascertain which one out of the many possible senses is intended. It must be so. Otherwise all human speech would be a jargon of meaningless phrases.

(2) It is impracticable for us to make a distinction between church meetings, and to believe that women are required to be silent in the social meeting, but not in other church assemblies. The same rule that applies to the social meeting applies to all church meetings.

The *word church*, we must observe, while in the fourteenth chapter referring primarily to the social meeting because that alone is definitely under consideration, is *not used as a name of that particular kind of church meeting*. The particular character of the meeting referred to in that chapter is indi-

cated by the various intimations already noticed as to the number and order of participants, the nature of the exercises, etc.; but it shares the name church in common with all meetings of the body of people known as the church. The usage in the New Testament was the same as it is with us. We speak of going to church when we mean to a meeting of the church, whether for preaching, for the observance of the Supper, for business, or for mutual edification. The name of the organization belonged to all meetings of the organization, and not to any one alone. And so, when women are bidden to be silent in the "churches," while the social meeting is primarily referred to, the use of this word necessarily gives a broader range to the prohibition, and leads our thought forth to all church meetings.

There is also a *practical difficulty* in restricting the prohibition to the social meeting. This is the freest type of meeting, the one above all others in which the least conspicuous and least aggressive members might find opportunity and scope for their gifts. Where would the women find place if not in such a meeting? Certainly not in preaching, the most formal and most public style of prophesying. There is no place half so favorable as the social meeting. If they are silent here they will be silent in all church meetings. If the restriction applies here, it applies with manifold more pertinence and force in all other church meetings.

(3) The *prohibition of women's speaking does not have reference to all public assemblies.*

The only positive textual reason for thinking the restriction is general is found in the meaning of the word *ekklesia*, church, which in classic Greek is *assembly*. And if the command were isolated, and spoken in no connection with a context, "Let the women keep silence in the churches," would undoubtedly mean, in ordinary Greek usage, "in the assemblies;" and the reference would be to all public assemblies. It might have this meaning in the New Testament, if it stood isolated or in an appropriate connection. But, as a matter of fact, it is not isolated, and the context proves that the reference is primarily or exclusively to church meetings. If, therefore, the restriction ought to have a broader scope it must be for reasons that do not lie on the surface of the record. It must be matter of inference of argument, of proof. And the demands of the situation are, that such reasoning must be clear and conclusive. It will not do, among other things, to lay too much stress upon a supposably distinct analogy between the church meeting and other public assemblies. Our grasp of such resemblances is not inspired and may fail at some essential point. Let us not be too sure that it is wholly trustworthy.

That the prohibition corresponds to the context, and refers especially to church meetings, is plain enough. If we suppose verse 33 to be separated by a period from verse 34, it is still true that the very

last thought expressed before the prohibition, is, "As in all the *churches of the saints*." The church meeting alone has been under consideration throughout the chapter, and even to the close of the sentence immediately preceding the command. There is no apparent change of conception in the command itself—"Let the women keep silence in the churches." It is "*the churches*"—apparently those that have all along been under consideration. But if we adopt the punctuation preferred by most of the leading critics, and read, "As in all the churches of the saints, let the women keep silence," etc., this view becomes the explicit teaching of the text. *Meyer* accordingly translates the passage, "As in all church assemblies of the saints, your women ought to be silent in the church assemblies."

Meyer, however, does not allow the exact meaning of the text to control his opinions. He speaks of it as "directed against the *public* speaking of women." And in this view all the commentaries are agreed. The idea seems to be that because speaking in the church is speaking in a public assembly, therefore it is forbidden *because* of publicity; and therefore all speaking in public is forbidden. The commentaries seem to assume that publicity is the objectionable feature of women's speaking. And, of course, if this is so, it is as objectionable in one place as another; as objectionable outside as in the church.

But the commentaries are certainly mistaken in

this opinion. Publicity is not the ground of the prohibition, and "silence in the churches" does not mean silence in all public assemblies. The proof of this will be developed in the course of our argument. We suggest at present two considerations looking in that direction:—

First, the *Christian consciousness* is favorable to women's speaking in some public assemblies. We think so. The prohibitory interpretation of the commentaries that has controlled the practice of Christendom since the days of the apostles, is backed to-day by critics more in learning and more in number than at any time in the past; and yet it is losing its grip upon the churches. It ceases to command their obedience. We can not believe this is wholly due to un-Christian impulses on the part of the churches. It is, in part at least, because the most spiritual and most devoted of the followers of Christ find, and think they must find, in the pages of Holy Writ a certain large freedom for women in the matter of prophesying; and because they have a growing sense of satisfaction in the idea that women may freely give to others the knowledge of divine things that God has given to them. God is ever with his true children, and we believe that he is to-day testifying to them, through the Word, that the knowledge of salvation and the ability to proclaim it, have been conferred on women to be used for the salvation of mankind. And the churches are conscious of this, and conscious that

many of the public uses to which these gifts are now being put are wholly beneficent, and the results blessed. Not otherwise can we explain the growing divergence between the practice of the churches and the teaching of the scholars, as to women's prophesying.

Secondly, if the prohibition of women's speaking is to be extended beyond the church meeting on the ground of publicity, there is no logical stopping-place short of making it universal. And if it is universal, the reconciliation of it with the right to prophesy foretold by Joel is an impossibility.

The attempt has been made to avoid this conclusion by supposing that assemblies may be classified as public and private. But, if such a distinction could be established, it must ever be too vague and indeterminate for practical use; and it must result in leaving Christ's people to be a law unto themselves.

What is a public assembly? What is a small and private one? Where is the line, and who shall draw it? Public sentiment is the only mentor, and that recognizes no fixed standard. Because there *is* no fixed standard. What is large in one place is small in another. What is large in the country might be small in the city. And will public sentiment ever come to agree that the speaking of women is permissible in some particular city assembly, because it is small for a city assembly; when, if the same assembly were to be removed a

few miles into the country, it would be large, and the law of silence must hold? And could public sentiment ever be brought to agree, respecting any assembly confessedly small, that the addition of one person would make it large? But such an agreement must be reached, if any line is to be drawn, and the distinction made practical. The attempt to reach such an agreement by gradually increasing the size of the assembly would assuredly result in a general conviction that no such line of demarcation between public and private assemblies can be drawn, and that there is no limit to the size of the assemblies where women's speaking is allowable, and no restriction upon their speaking. It already has reached this point over a wide territory, and on the given premises it ought to.

If we admit that in an assembly consisting of two women and one man the women have a right to speak, then, by increasing the size of the assembly by adding one person at a time, we may prove to a demonstration that the restriction, if based on publicity, is hopelessly and everywhere lost. And, on the other hand, if publicity is the objectionable thing, then, by gradually diminishing the size of an assembly, we may in like manner show that women should be silent in even the smallest assembly where men are present.

In other words, if the law of silence is to be extended beyond the letter of the requirement, and applied in other than church meetings on the ground

of publicity, women are forever excluded from addressing assemblies of any size where men are present. But on Pentecost the Holy Spirit illustrated women's permanent right by moving them to prophesy before a multitude of men. And Paul was inspired to instruct them how they should conduct themselves while engaged in the exercise of that right (I Cor., xi: 5). They should be "veiled" out of respect to the "headship" of the men present.

We conclude, therefore, that the restriction upon women applies, if not to church meetings alone, certainly not to public assemblies in general, and not to church meetings *because* they are public. And from the present outlook of our discussion we pronounce the sphere of the prohibition to be in the church meeting, irrespective of the rational grounds of such a limitation and of modifications that may be suggested by the reasons when they appear.

4. The *reconciliation* of the prohibition of speaking in I Cor., xiv: 34 with the permission tacitly granted in xi: 5 is a matter of no difficulty on the basis of this interpretation.

When it is said that women should be "veiled" while praying or prophesying, we naturally suppose they have some right to pray and prophesy, as they have not if a total prohibition is impending over them, that has not gone into effect simply because they have not yet learned of it. And it is reasonable to suppose that the right conceded is the same Joel predicted for the "daughters" of "all flesh"

in the last days. We can not think the blessing thus vouchsafed has ever been recalled, as a whole or in any part of it. The gifts of God are without repentance. But on the contrary, the original grant, while not expressing, necessarily implied; all the restraints that might ever be needed to constitute the benefaction wholly normal and beneficent. The right to prophesy was granted in the first place to women as women, and subject to all the qualifications that essential womanhood might ever impose upon it. Paul recognized the same identical right, and the restraints which he was called to declare were but the bringing out to view of the picture which in Joel was actually present but undeveloped save in outline.

This right to prophesy is a large and fruitful privilege of undefined extent. The Holy Spirit in Joel's time spoke of it among the very few things that were worthy of mention in connection with Messiah's reign; spoke of it as one of the great and striking characteristics of the gospel age. Silence in the church is an exception of comparatively narrow scope. It was not necessary to mention the exception in immediate connection with the rule. The rule of privilege was the great object of the distant vision and prophecy. The details and limitations naturally demanded consideration only as the exigencies of the age of realization brought them to view. Paul nowhere states the general rule as to women's prophesying. That had been

done already. His mission was to state the necessary qualifications or limitations of the rule. He mentions two, both of them implying the existence of the right thus regulated—the one declaring *how it should* be exercised; the other, *where it should not*.

In this view of the case, there is no reason whatever why the two regulations should have been mentioned together, or why one should have been alluded to in connection with the other. On the contrary, there are various reasons why they should be kept separate. No good writer ever mixes together conceptions so different in nature and scope. Confusion must be the inevitable result. Clearness demands that they be shown to be distinct and different by a separate treatment. Moreover, there was decided opposition to the divine order on both points (Studies on the Epistles, Godet, ch's iii and iv; I Cor., xi: 16; xiv: 37). Each had to be made as clear and emphatic as possible. Each must be enforced by commands wrought together in a perfectly finished and carefully guarded unity. To mention the law of silence in the discussion of veiling would weaken both. But again, the right to prophesy is only *implied* in connection with veiling; and there is always great rhetorical difficulty in mentioning explicitly in a subordinate way an exception to a right that is merely implied. It never ought to be attempted unless it is absolutely necessary. And here it is not, because the silencing of

women in the *church* implies that they have a right to speak elsewhere just as effectually as does the duty of being veiled *while* prophesying.

This explanation is natural, reasonable, obvious. It is in all respects an appropriate corollary to the antecedent doctrine. It is the only reconciliation of these texts that fairly meets the demands of reason and really establishes harmony.

The commentaries, however, so far as we know, regard the restriction as based upon publicity, and as forbidding women to speak in any public assembly. But this is pure assumption. There is not anywhere in the connection a hint that publicity is the objectionable feature of speaking in the church. And the critics, by assuming that it is, have taken upon themselves the burden of proving that the right to prophesy—an essentially public right in its ordinary manifestations—is both granted and forbidden. It is difficult to reconcile such propositions; and the attempt to reconcile them results in a variety of conflicting and unsatisfactory theories.

It is to be observed that this is not a matter of textual criticism; not a point upon which a profound mastery of Greek idioms and forms avails one. It is rather a question of the comparison of the results of criticism—a point upon which any logical mind is almost as likely to be correct as any other. We are not challenging the authority of the princes of interpretation when we venture to have an opinion of our own upon such matters.

The critics themselves speak hesitatingly and doubtfully. *Meyer's* last edition avows a change of opinion. *Godet* differs from *Meyer*, both before and after his change; and introduces his own opinion, after canvassing many others, with the words, "I rather think." Under such circumstances an uncritical layman is not presumptuous if he "*rather thinks*" the critics are all at sea, and follows his own conclusions.

There are *three principal theories* as to the harmony between I Cor., xi: 5 and I Cor., xiv: 34—First, that prophesying is permitted only in *private* (*Hodge, Lange*), or in the *smaller meetings*, "such as fall under the category of a church in the house" (*Meyer*); secondly, that the *prohibition* of speaking in mixed assemblies is absolute, but for good and sufficient reasons was *postponed* and only seemingly permitted in xi: 5 (*Calvin, Schaff*); thirdly, that silence is enjoined as a rule, but that *exception* is made in favor of those who, "in consequence of a *sudden revelation*," felt themselves "constrained to give utterance to this extraordinary impulse of the Spirit" (*Godet*).

(1) The theory that the prophesying of women is *permitted only in private* or in the *smaller and more private assemblies*, is easily disposed of.

To this theory, in so far as it excludes women from speaking in mixed assemblies at all and remands them to private life, it is sufficient to say that it is inconsistent with the necessary implication

of I Cor., xi: 5, that there was an audience to be addressed, and that it was composed in part of men. The "veil" was required, not for domestic use, or for an audience of women, but as a due recognition of the speaker's relation to any men who might be present.

As to the idea that speaking was forbidden only in the larger and more public assemblies and permitted in the smaller and more private ones, we have already shown that such a distinction between assemblies can not be made practical as a rule of conduct. There is no assembly of such size and such degree of publicity that all mankind will agree that it marks the boundary line between the public and the private assembly. And there is no authority competent to establish such a line of demarcation and to make it binding upon all consciences. The result must be a great uncertainty as to the exact nature and extent of the divine requirement; a wide range of harassing doubt to conscientious minds; and a gradual but certain lapse of the law into desuetude because of indefiniteness. It is also to be noted that the "church in the house," spoken of by *Meyer* as a sample of the private assembly, was the rule in the apostles' day, there being as yet no public houses of worship; and all the meetings seem to have been more private and more informal than with us. But they were the "churches," or meetings of the church, respecting which the apostolic restriction was spoken.

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(2) The idea of *postponement* is, as *Godet* says, "unsatisfactory." *Meyer* found it so and abandoned it. "One does not," says *Godet*, "lay down a condition to the doing of a thing which he intends afterwards to forbid absolutely." Why forbid a particular method, when to forbid the thing itself is effectually to exclude all methods? As *Meyer* says, against his own previous view (I Cor., xi: 5), "The teaching of this passage would be aimless and groundless if Paul were here only postponing for a little the prohibition in xiv: 34."*

If, instead of the prohibition of unveiling, the law of silence had been given in chapter 11, unveiling would have been excluded at the same time and without saying a word about it. So the requirement of the veil is entirely superfluous—wasted force—on this theory of postponement. For this view supposes that the very thing permitted in xi: 5—the praying and prophesying—and all there is of it, is forbidden in xiv: 34. And the only rational justification of the discourse on veiling is in supposing that women have some right to pray and prophesy that is not called in question further on. It was to guard the exercise of such an actually existing and permanent right against abuse that women were directed to retain the veil.

* This passage strikingly illustrates the uncertainties of the theory that publicity is the objectionable element of women's speaking in the church. So great a critic as *Meyer* once thought it drove him to the holding of an opinion that he now declares to have been "aimless and groundless."

(3) The idea that *miraculous prophesying*, or speaking under a special inspiration, is the only public speaking permitted to women, has no more to recommend it than the theories already noticed.

If it were shown that the gift referred to in chapter xi as lawful for women is miraculous or inspired prophesying, still it does not follow that the exercise of it is permitted to women in church meetings. Miraculous gifts were not above apostolic regulation. The gift of tongues was purely miraculous; but Paul forbids the use of it in the church, unless it were accompanied by interpretation (I Cor., xiv: 28). And women were forbidden to use a "tongue" in the church in any case. Says *Godet* "The word *lalein* [speak] in chapter xiv is used all through to denote prophetic speaking and speaking in tongues" (I Cor., xi: 5). And the command says, "It is not permitted unto them to *speak*" (*lalein*). That is, it is not permitted unto them to prophesy or to speak with tongues. If now we suppose both of these gifts to be miraculous, as the latter certainly is, why should not the rule apply to both equally? Why is not the miraculous gift of prophecy forbidden, as well as the miraculous gift of tongues? Certainly it is. There is no difference. The Holy Spirit regulates the exercise of all his gifts, and the precepts of Paul in this fourteenth chapter are the divine law for even those that are miraculous. The supposition that miraculous prophesying is referred to in chapter xi is therefore futile.

Even if it be true it proves nothing, explains nothing, for even miraculous prophesying is forbidden to women in chapter xiv.

But the suggestion that miraculous prophesying alone is referred to in the eleventh chapter, and that such prophesying alone is spoken of as being permitted to women, is at best pure hypothesis. There is not a particle of evidence that any other prophesying is mentioned in chapter xi than that which constitutes the burden of chapter xiv and is referred to in the prohibition of verse 34. And that, as we have seen, is the natural gift. We believe the natural gift is primarily referred to in both chapters—in chapter xi as being generally lawful for women, but in chapter xiv as being excluded from the church meeting.

The idea that inspired prophesying alone is permitted to women signifies that, since miraculous gifts have ceased, women's right to speak in promiscuous assemblies has wholly passed away. And that is the doctrine of those who hold this view. "Woman belongs to the domestic hearth," says *Godet*, "so that a single public question on her part would alone be an impropriety; for by putting her on a public stage, as it were, such an act would go contrary to the modesty of her destined sphere" (I Cor., xiv: 35).

All that Joel's wonderful prediction signifies for women, therefore, is, that some two thousand years ago a few women were inspired to speak publicly on

a few isolated occasions—a preposterously insignificant boon in comparison with the evident pregnant richness of the promise. It is the old story over again of the mountain bringing forth a mouse.

But the miraculous gifts furnished *no fulfillment at all* of the prediction. If Joel promised anything to any class of people, it was that there should be a marked increase in the *abundance* and *prevalence* of spiritual blessings, and even of the prophetic gift, the crown and capstone of them all. No longer in drops (*Calvin*), but by a great outpouring rain, should the influence descend; and no longer upon a few, but upon all, even upon the least promising of all classes of society, should it come with its abounding richness. If then we bear in mind that in Old Testament times some women prophesied, as Miriam, Deborah, Hannah, Huldah; it will be seen that the miraculous prophesying of a few women in New Testament times marks no advance whatever in the nature, and none worth mentioning, if any at all, in the abundance of the blessing. We must reflect that we have certain information of women's public prophesying in the days of the apostles on barely a single occasion—that of Pentecost—and that the probabilities of the Scripture narrative point to an incipient practice on only two other occasions (Acts, i: 14; I Cor., xi: 5), on the first of which the prophesying was certainly not inspired. Bearing these facts in mind, and the well-known usages of apostolic times, it will appear that, if we

admit the prophesying all to have been specially inspired, there was not a fulfillment, or anything like a fulfillment, of the prediction. The *essential element* of the blessing foretold—the abundance and prevalence of the prophetic anointing—was wanting.

We believe that no obvious and satisfactory reconciliation of I Cor., xi: 5 with I Cor., xiv: 34 is possible which denies woman's right to speak in public assemblies. The attempts that have been made are failures. But on the other hand, if we allow the Word to state its own doctrine, neither adding to it nor abating from it, we shall find a perfect harmony ready-made to our hand. We find that Joel grants to women, in common with all classes of society, a general right to prophesy in mixed assemblies—a right confirmed on Pentecost, when women spoke on a most public occasion; that Paul, in the eleventh chapter of Corinthians, is speaking, not of church meetings in particular, but of mixed assemblies as a class, in which women have a right to prophesy, according to the prediction, if they be duly veiled; but that in the fourteenth chapter he states an exception to this general rule to the effect that in church meetings they should be silent.

We do not know that this doctrine has been stated by any commentator. The idea that there may be a valid classification of public assemblies, and that the church meeting may be subject to a

different law from public assemblies in general, does not seem to have been recognized. It may appear that an essential factor of Scripture teaching on this subject has thus been overlooked. But, whether or not we shall succeed in giving a satisfactory rational explanation, we are at least confident that the doctrine we have given is in the main scriptural; and that it is the only doctrine by which Paul can be reconciled with Joel or with himself. Or, rather, it is the only doctrine by which the unity of the mind of God on this subject can be made to appear.

In reaching this conclusion we have in the main followed the consensus of the great critics. We have not presumed to challenge at a single point the legitimate results of criticism. We have accepted them and followed implicitly up to the point where criticism passes over into speculation, and the scholars become hopelessly at variance among themselves. We have ventured to assert an independent opinion at two points only of the discussion, as follows:—

First, upon Joel ii: 28. The interpreters are unanimous in referring the fulfillment to the whole period of the Christian dispensation. They speak of the outpouring of the Spirit upon "all flesh" till the end of time; of the consequent leveling of earthly distinctions; of the deliverance of the captives; of the emancipation of woman—the fruits of the gradual progress and triumph of the gospel.

And they speak in general terms of the universality of the right to prophesy—the greatest of the spiritual gifts. But, when they speak of *woman's* right to prophesy, a sudden paralysis seizes their tongues, and we hear only of the day of Pentecost (Acts, ii: 17, 18), the four daughters of Philip (Acts, xxi: 9), and the women of Corinth (I Cor., xi: 5). We believe here is a manifest inconsistency, and that woman's right to prophesy is as evidently permanent and universal as are the other indicated blessings of the Spirit's reign. It is arbitrary and unreasonable to constitute the women alone an exception to the universality of the promise. We follow the scholars so far as they go; but they seem to us to stop short of equity and consistency in this particular.

Secondly, with reference to the law of silence (I Cor., xiv: 34), we follow the scholars so far as they rest upon their scholarship and go together. But when they get beyond the sphere of their critical knowledge into speculations where hardly any two of them agree—when our guides prove that they are guessing at the way—we decline to advance further. We see that women are required to be silent in the church; but the critics show us no obvious and imperative reasons for supposing a further restriction. And until the voice of Authority is shown to extend the restriction further, we feel a reluctance, which seems to us both reasonable and Christian, to supposing any such further restriction of woman's

prerogative. And especially so, as such further restriction would evidently close very effectually every avenue to the establishment of a rational harmony in the teachings of the Word upon this subject.

II.—Rationale of Restriction.

If, as we suppose, women are required to be silent in church meetings, but are in general at liberty to speak in other public assemblies, the question at once thrusts itself to the front, Wherefore such a distinction? Why this difference between the law of church meetings and of other assemblies? These questions demand an answer. Such a difference can not be made arbitrarily and without reason. It must rest upon rational grounds. The will of God is consistently rational. And while the divine law is no less plain and no less binding as a rule of conduct if the reasons and rational grounds for it are hidden from our view, yet as rational beings our highest service is that in which an instructed reason plays the largest part. And we shall accordingly find in the *rationale of the restriction* upon women's prophesying the keystone that crowns the arch of Scripture teaching on the subject.

We have seen that the right to prophesy is the right to "speak for" God to men; that it is essentially a teaching gift, involving the right to unfold and expound religious truths in the most formal and

didactic manner, or in other words to preach; that women are definitely permitted to address mixed assemblies or assemblies of men alone; that the only regulation prescribed for such occasions is the wearing of the "sign" of their sex; and that there is no limit set to the size or publicity of the assembly. In other words, woman's right to speak in public assemblies is identical with man's—is as large, as unlimited, as free, as his—save that the exercise of it is forbidden in church meetings.

The reason of this restriction is, then, obviously *not in publicity; not in the promiscuousness or size of the audience; not in teaching.* Least of all in teaching, for prophecy is essentially teaching and prophesying is the very thing permitted.* And if we turn our attention carefully to the text under discussion we shall find no allusion to any of these things; but the reason for silence appears to be wholly in *subjection*. "It is not permitted unto them to speak; but let them be in subjection, as also saith the law."

The situation, then, is simply this: Women are required to keep silence in the church because speaking is inconsistent with womanly subjection; but they are permitted to speak in other promiscuous assemblies, and therefore—subjection is not violated by such speaking.

*We shall find it necessary to dwell upon this point in the next chapter, where teaching is apparently forbidden. But teaching in general is not forbidden anywhere in Scripture.

The inference is inevitable that there is somehow a difference in the relations between speakers and hearers in the two cases. In the church meeting the speaker is not subject to the hearers; while in other public assemblies he is subject. In the church he is independent or exercises dominance over his auditors, while in the generality of assemblies he is, not independent, but dependent. Do we discover any difference in public assemblies that may account for such a difference in the relations of speakers to hearers? Any difference, for example, in the constitution of them?

We have seen that the *external elements* in the makeup of the church meeting are identical with those of other assemblies—that in size, promiscuousness, publicity, they may be identical. We may go further and say that both alike may be thoroughly organized, so that the external conditions of form, arrangement, method, are wholly one and the same thing for both. This is frequently the actual state of the case.

Is the same true of the *internal reality*? Of the vital organic principle of the two classes of assemblies? Do the people meet in response to the same classes of motives? Is that moral or spiritual appeal, which the cause of religion or some other cause addresses to them with a view to securing their attendance, the same for the church meeting as for other assemblies? Admitting that it may be the same in subject-matter, and that the same classes of

interests call us together; is it not apparent that there may be a difference in the *manner in which this appeal is made to us*, that may place us in very different relations to the company of those who have met in response to it? It may come *soliciting* our attention and attendance, while at the same time conceding our freedom and recognizing it as our prerogative to say yes or no at pleasure. Or it may come as the commandment of God *requiring* us "not to forsake the assembling of ourselves together." It may come in the attitude of a suppliant, or in that of a master—as an appeal, or with divine authority. The result, in the one case, is the *voluntary assembly*; in the other, the *church meeting* comes to view. And, in just so far as Christians give due filial recognition to the laws of God, the church meeting is *not* a voluntary assembly. If Christianity is true and God is God, then a difference of sanctions differences the church meeting from all assemblies of merely human origin.

Is it not instantly apparent that this difference in the constitution of public assemblies is calculated to determine a *difference in the relations of speakers to hearers*? In the voluntary assembly the people gather because for some reason they are pleased to do so. They go and listen to the speakers because of their own free and voluntary choice. The speaking must be made agreeable and attractive to them or they will exercise their prerogative of choice to absent themselves. The speakers *must* please, or

they will talk to empty benches. They are dependent for a hearing upon the good pleasure of their fellow-men—their position is one of subjection. And this is evidently right: for no man has a right to impose his opinions upon his fellows without their consent.

The church stands in a very different relation to those who speak in its meetings. The law that constitutes the church meeting is not the freedom of those at liberty to please themselves, but the obligation of children to do the will of their Father. It is our *duty* to meet statedly for worship and for mutual edification, and that whether it is agreeable to us or not. God has instituted the church and its appointments, and has laid upon us the obligation of faithful attendance (Heb., x: 25). We neglect them and absent ourselves only by slighting the law and authority of God. God has ordained the speaking of the church meeting for the edifying of the church, and he expects us to be present giving heed to what is said, for our own good and for the glory of God in the building up of the church. Thus the church is subjected by the law of God to those who speak in its meetings. And it is because men should not be thus subjected to women, that women are bidden to be silent in church meetings.

Quite different was the occasion when women first received from God's hand the gift that was to mark her exalted privilege in the latter days. Truly God summoned the multitude together (Acts,

ii: 1-18), but it was by furnishing an attraction, not by constraint of law. The people met because they were pleased to meet. And because their meeting was an expression of their freedom, women might speak to them without violating womanly subjection. So it was in a vast voluntary assembly that woman's right to prophesy was first recognized and illustrated. In such an assembly the standard was set up for the guidance of those millions of women who in ages following should sound forth the word of life to perishing men. Such prophesying, assuredly, it was that Paul tacitly recognized as legitimate (I Cor., xi: 5); and such is the great and growing volume of prophetic activity in missions, temperance, and various philanthropic labors, that to-day pursues its beneficent course in channels altogether independent of the church meeting.

With respect to this distinction in the nature of public assemblies we remark:—

1. It is not merely a hypothetical possibility, or a doubtful theory. It is an *indubitable fact*—the stuff science is made of. One may as well doubt the existence of the church meeting itself as to doubt the distinction we have indicated between it and the voluntary assembly.

2. It is *precisely such a difference in public assemblies as should be expected* to explain the difference between woman's general right to speak and her duty of silence in the church. It has to do, not with such irrelevant matters as the personale of

the audience, publicity greater or less, the subject-matter of discourse, or the method of address; but with that which is exactly suited to the case. It explains authority by authority, subjection by subjection. It explains the authority of the speaker, where he has authority, by the authority of God which subjects the assembly to him; and the subjection of the speaker, when he is subject, by the necessity he is under to placate an audience that is morally free to abstain from giving him a hearing. And this is an explanation that explains to the very uttermost why women should be silent in the church, but not necessarily in the generality of public assemblies, whatever their size and publicity. The subject sex should speak only when speaking is a prerogative of subjection, as it manifestly is in the voluntary assembly, and as it manifestly is not in the church meeting.

3. This difference in public assemblies is *essentially and permanently characteristic* of them. It is not contingent upon circumstances of any sort whatever. The church meeting is necessarily and always subject to those who have a recognized right to speak in it. It matters not that they are willingly subject. The children of God ought to be willingly subject, because it is the ordinance of God that subjects them. But, whether willingly or unwillingly, they are subject to him who speaks—subject because in the church he who speaks presumably has his right direct from God and may use it in

a Christian and lawful manner at his pleasure; and because, if he does so, the church is not at liberty to refrain from hearing, or to silence him. But the voluntary assembly is master of its speaking. It is everywhere and always true of such assemblies—it belongs to the very essence of them—that they may welcome or forbid whom they will; hear or not hear at their pleasure.

It is because of this fact that the church meeting is necessarily and always subject to its speakers that women are absolutely and unconditionally forbidden to speak. If women were to speak, the church would be subjected to them by reason of the divine law that convokes the assembly; and that quite independently of the state of mind of the persons composing the assembly. They may be pleased or displeased; they may desire or frown upon the speaking of women—the fact remains just the same, that God has subjected the church to those who speak in the meetings, and that speaking is always on that account a prerogative of headship and listening, so far as the church membership is concerned, an exercise expressive of subjection. Men may be willing, many undoubtedly are, to be thus subjected to women. They may be willing to put on petticoats, part their hair in the middle, and cultivate female duties and graces generally. It is not a manly and honorable thing to do. It is disgraceful, “shameful.” And this is why the Lord has forbidden women to speak in the church—“it is

shameful." Shameful, no doubt, to women, to exercise a masculine prerogative. But shameful especially to men that they are willing to assume a character and relation proper only to women. Is it not barely possible that the wisdom of God may still be our safety and our glory even in this wonderful age of "progress" and "reform?"

4. The *distinction* between public assemblies is *obvious, natural, practical*. The church is an institution by itself, standing in no organic relation to any earthly institution, and is in no danger of being confounded with any other institution whatever. And just so the church meeting, as representing the church, stands apart by itself and is in no danger of being confounded with other assemblies. With us, as among the early Greek-speaking disciples, it bears the name of the organization. We speak of going to church, when we mean to the church meeting, and not when we refer to any other meeting. So keeping silence in the churches never could be misunderstood, and supposed to refer to public assemblies in general, unless that idea were forced into it.

The church meeting is sharply distinguished in practice, not only from public assemblies having secular aims, but also from the voluntary religious enterprises of Christians, even when these are cultivated in immediate connection with the church, as the young people's societies, neighborhood prayer-meetings, the Sunday school, etc., which are always called by their own names and always instinctively

treated as voluntary offerings of Christian devotion. The church never thinks to require or to prescribe these things. It does not as a church make appointments for a limited section of its membership. It does not undertake to say that the members in a particular locality shall hold weekly meetings for prayer, or that the young people shall organize for work. The members do as they please about these matters, as they have a perfect right to do, each using his own discretion as to how he may best serve the Lord, and each being answerable to the Lord alone for the wise exercise of his discretion. But the church meeting is the Lord's appointment for all the members, and it has a divine obligation for all. It addresses an imperative *ought* to the conscience of every one, asserting a rightful claim to the allegiance and coöperation of all.

Especially is the church meeting sharply distinguished in practice from the meetings by which Christian women conduct a great variety of public enterprises in the interest of religion and morality. These enterprises, often widely organized, are conducted entirely by women, and, even when nominally auxiliary to the church, are really as independent, and as purely voluntary, as though there were no churches in existence. It is a free-will offering of Christian love. And in the vitality and growing usefulness of this great modern work of women, as also in the young people's and Christian association organizations, we may find ample demonstration

of the title of the voluntary assembly to a broad field of its own in the realm of Christian service.

The voluntary assembly is a fact; a conspicuous fact; a vital, characteristic, and sharply defined fact, in the religious life of the age. Standing apart from the church meeting, and broadly distinguished from it, it supplements its usefulness in various ways, by doing a work the church meeting as such could not do; enlisting forces the church could not so well make use of; and stimulating a devotion, and zeal as peculiarly its own as are the demands of its own work. It is the true *helpmate* of the church meeting, the true field of the helper's prophetic labors.

5. The distinction between the church meeting and the voluntary assembly is *comprehensive of all assemblies for a religious purpose*.

There are, however, undoubtedly, church meetings that are not strictly meetings of the local church. The meetings of the chosen representatives of the churches in councils, synods, conferences, associations, and the like, can not be regarded as in any sense voluntary. They are church meetings, because the churches, though not actually, are yet representatively, present. The responsibility, which God has placed upon each member to be faithful to the interests and appointments of the church, has been reinforced and enlarged in the case of the representatives by that of the entire church delegated to them for the specific purposes in view—government, consultation, fellowship, coöperation

in Christian work—insomuch that a meeting of the representatives of the churches is not only a response to the same divine authority that convokes the church meeting, but is also the embodiment of a far larger section of it. If women should be silent in the churches, then surely even more decidedly is it wrong that they should be chosen as delegates to represent the churches, or that they should speak in the assemblies of such delegates.

The local body of Christian disciples are *bound* by divine law, not only to one another and to the local interests of Christ's kingdom, but also to all saints and to the world-wide work of Christianity. The local church has *duties*, growing out of the fellowship of Christian faith and work, to other churches—to all Christendom. Churches are not isolated and self-sufficient units, but parts of a great body—an army of conquest—moving at the word of a common Leader. And, in just so far as coöperation seems to them to be necessary and expedient as a means of enabling them most largely and most perfectly to respond to the will of Christ in the salvation of men, in just so far it is obligatory upon them; and because it is obligatory upon the *churches*, and so upon Christian men, the law of silence holds for women as in the local church meeting.

6. The *essential obligation* of the members to the meetings of the church is *loyalty to the church*. The New Testament has not furnished us with anything like a catalogue of the church meetings that

should be held. It has not indicated the number and frequency of the meetings, save in a general way, or prescribed the times and places of holding them. It has outlined the character of some of them. The social-religious meeting for edification (I Cor., ch. xiv), the observance of the Lord's supper (Matt., xxvi: 26-30; I Cor., xi: 17-34), the preaching service (Acts, xx: 7), the prayer-meeting (Acts, xii: 5), are suggested, it seems, as illustrations and types of Christian meetings for worship and service, rather than as definite appointments. They are to be reproduced by the churches at times and under circumstances answering to their needs. And of these needs the churches are themselves of necessity the judges. There ought of course to be, and naturally will be, a general reference to the weekly sabbath as to the times and frequency of the meetings; but this is not exclusive. We ought to observe the sabbath; but whether by meetings one or more than one does not appear, and what they should be, or at what hours held, the Word does not seem definitely to say. The church is left at liberty to settle such questions of detail for itself; and it may settle them to suit its own convenience, and may vary and multiply meetings at need, or even at pleasure. Still, the meetings of the church, though appointed by the church and not immediately by God, are church meetings, and within the bounds of Christianity and reason they are obligatory upon the members, as the appoint-

ment of God. . And this they are because the church is a divine institution, and because the meetings themselves are divinely ordained in the *essentials* of matter and form, though not in the incidents of time and place.

So the obligation of Christians to the church meeting is first an obligation to the *church*. It is the obligation of each member of the body to be loyal to the movements of the body—the obligation of the individual to subject his will to the decisions and appointments of the assembly, working in subjection to the commandments of Christ. Our obligation is primarily to God, and secondarily to the church—to the meeting as the appointment of God through the church. In its earthward relations the church controls the meeting, and has a moral right to control the members relative to it—a right to insist upon attendance, and to call members to account for non-attendance.

It is, therefore, as the *meeting of a divine institution* that the church meeting asserts its imperative claim upon our time and attention. And this suggests an appropriate nomenclature. We may classify church meetings as *institutional assemblies*—a designation coördinate with and corresponding to the perhaps more obvious title of the other, or *voluntary*, class of assemblies.

7. Is the church meeting the only institutional assembly—the only assembly that represents a divine institution? In other words, Is the church the

only public institution that commands the allegiance of men because of its divine origin and authority?

The asking of the question suggests the answer. Of course, the church is not the only institution that has a divinely verified claim upon men's allegiance. The *State* answers to this description as truly as the church; and those public assemblies that go to the make-up of the machinery of civil government—those assemblies in a popular government by which the will of the people makes its decisions known, and gives them effect—have a moral claim upon the attention and coöperation of all citizens. And Christian men owe it to God to contribute according to their ability to the maintenance and administration of civil government upon principles of truth and righteousness.

The apostle is speaking of civil government when he says, "Let every soul be in subjection to the higher powers: for there is no power but of God; and the powers that be are ordained of God" (Rom., xiii: 1 ff). Rulers are declared to be "ministers of God's service" (vs. 6), to whom we "must needs be in subjection, not only because of the wrath [of violated civil authority], but also for conscience sake" (vs. 5). Our Savior, when questioned as to the propriety of paying tribute, and when the real query was whether it was right thus to acknowledge the sovereignty of a foreign and heathen despot; replied by the enunciation of a principle of the

broadest scope, that lays the obligation upon every citizen, not only to pay taxes, but also to respond loyally to every just claim of an existing government:—"Render therefore unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's" (Matt., xxii: 21). There is that which is Cæsar's, even though Cæsar be not the ideal of human governments. The Cæsar *de facto* is entitled to honor and allegiance. (Of course, within limits prescribed by reason and the Word of God.)

But in a popular government, there is nothing that more truly belongs to Cæsar—nothing that the individual citizen more truly owes as a debt to the government—than the wise and efficient administration of that minute section or unit of authority which, in God's good providence, has been intrusted to him as one of a nation of self-governing freemen. That is the thing above all others for which God has made him responsible—which God specially commands him to render. There is thus precisely the same obligation resting upon citizens to attend the meetings—caucuses, conventions, and the like—by which men and policies are determined for the public weal, that there is upon church members to attend the meetings by which the church carries on its work.

State and church are equally divine institutions; to each alike we owe, as to the appointment of God, a loyal allegiance; and so to the assemblies by which the functions of each are maintained and

made operative we are under the debt of attendance and faithful coöperation. While, therefore, we do not forget that silence was enjoined on women primarily and literally in church meetings alone; we find that the reason, and therefore the rule, applies with equal pertinence and force to the assemblies by which civil government is carried on. The political assembly, like the religious, has a divinely verified claim upon the attendance of men, and is thereby subjected to its speakers. Speaking is thus a prerogative of headship and is forbidden to the subject sex.

And how much more are women forbidden participation in those functions, in church and state, which are the peculiar expression and embodiment of authority. How much more is the symbol and instrument of power—the ballot—denied them. And how much more is the authority itself, reduced to concrete form and acting directly upon the people in the shape of official trust and responsibility, forbidden to them. The office-holder is the “servant” of the people only as wielding their authority for them. Every office-holder has a certain degree of authority. Even the church clerk, not only necessarily speaks in church meetings, but is also *ex officio* a participant in all church legislation. The deaconess (Rom., xvi: 1) is rightly a “servant of the church,” now as in apostolic times, only in ministering to her own sex, or in private offices of charity and mercy; not as wielding

the authority of a deacon over church affairs. And, especially where the deacons act as an advisory committee, a woman might as well be pastor as to be a member of that almost inevitably autocratic oligarchy.

The doctrine of the Word as to women's prophesying seems, then, to be, that women may freely prophesy; but, necessarily and of course prophesy *as women*, and therefore in voluntary assemblies alone. The voluntary assembly, with its freedom and boundless possibilities, is the *helpmate sphere* of public prophesying, as the institutional assembly, in church and state, is the peculiar province of man as "head."

This doctrine has the marks of genuine science in that it takes the apparently conflicting statements of Scripture; interprets them each according to its own peculiar nature—assigning to the declaration of privilege (Joel, ii: 28) a largeness corresponding to the general scope of the promise; and to the restriction (I Cor., xiv: 34) limitations answering to the particularity of its phraseology—and shows that, instead of being contradictory, they are but the opposite faces of a single divine truth, in that they emphasize, on the one hand, the equal humanity of woman, and, on the other hand, her womanhood.

The doctrine commends itself on abstract rational grounds, as shunning one-sided extremes of opinion and statement, and as exhibiting that equipoise of

reason which always and necessarily looks for the full-orbed truth as a resultant, or golden mean, of the apparently contending principles of the spiritual universe.

In view of the universal adaptations of nature, also, the doctrine of a liberty commensurate with the possibilities of woman's natural endowments, culture, and opportunities, and limited only by the essential law of her sex, seems eminently reasonable and in harmony with the principles of God's moral government. It would not seem reasonable that gifts like woman's—gifts of intellect, heart, and tongue; prophetic gifts—should be circumscribed in action and allowed no adequate field. God's way is to give, not only an adequate, but an illimitable, range for every gift; boundless possibilities of expansion and of usefulness. It is because the views of the commentaries on this point are unnaturally and unscripturally restrictive—because they impose a restraint contrary to reason and to the laws of God—that they are surely being repudiated by modern Christendom. Is it not an unspeakable pity that Christians can not be wise enough to discriminate, and to reject *only* the false? But so it often is, that one extreme of error leads to another.

This doctrine also satisfies the reason, in that it proclaims a distribution of the world's work, in church and state as in the home, on the basis of the sex relation. It was to be expected that so radical and pervasive a distinction as that of sex

would determine public, as well as domestic, differences of function; to be expected that the line of demarcation between the public duties of men and those of women would be as broad as that between the domestic duties of husbands and wives; to be expected that, as difference is stamped upon *every phase* of service in the home, and as it amounts to an almost total difference of functions there, so in public the plan of God would prescribe almost wholly distinct spheres and methods of activity. Why not? Men are men, and women are women, in public as in private. Why should not the same fundamental difference in nature determine similar differences in action everywhere? Unquestionably it ought; and in the teaching of God's Word it manifestly does. God not only requires women to recognize and acknowledge their womanhood by appearing with covered head on all public occasions; but, by a necessary implication in connection with the plainest of positive precepts, he definitely points out the distinctive agencies and methods by which the church is to honor the law of sex in all its work, and in all its reconstruction of human society. And if this had not been done, the church would have been left no wiser than the world to grapple with and solve one of the most perplexing and difficult problems in the renovation of a fallen humanity.

The doctrine that the voluntary assembly is the helpmate sphere of public prophesying and the normal means of woman's public work, is preg-

nant with practical suggestions. It speaks to us of a division of the world's work, in which each sex finds that peculiarly adapted to its own gifts. It tells us that women may have a work of their own, in state and church as well as in the home, as great as they can do; and that they are very liable to be forgetting and neglecting their own work when assuming to do man's. The helper was created because she was needed to do a work all her own, different from man's, as woman is different from man, a work correlative and supplementary to his. What that work is, is still to some extent a question; and it is liable to be a partially unanswered question for some time to come. The answer lies with women themselves. The fact that the method is voluntary has a profound significance. While, on the one hand, it excuses women for long centuries of idle prophetic gifts, and makes their public work contingent upon favoring circumstances; on the other hand, it makes their action to some degree tentative and experimental, and success conditional upon their own wisdom in choosing work and methods, and upon their devotion in pursuing them.

Fifty years ago the doctrine here promulgated would have been almost purely speculative. It would have been beset by the uncertainties that surround unfulfilled prophecy. To-day it can point to the great and growing work of Christian women conducted by means of voluntary assemblies, and say with better reason than Peter, "This is that

which hath been spoken by the prophet Joel." That of which Peter spoke was but a typical foretaste of the reality. That which we behold is the very thing itself which Joel foresaw—*womankind* inducted by the gospel into their heritage of prophetic usefulness. In this work of Christian women, though even now but entering upon its career, we have the element of fact that serves to bring our interpretation down from the airy realms of speculation to the solid ground of reality. It is no vague and uncertain reality. In the rapid growth and diversification of woman's work; in the spontaneous ease and unconstrained vigor of its development, we behold the vitality of truth and nature, answering to the promise of the Word, and assuring us beyond a doubt that the Helpmate is at last rising to a conception of her full vocation.

But let the daughters of Eve beware of the forbidden fruit. In an age when they are tasting the sweets of an unwonted liberty, it is easy, but it is not safe, to forget precisely where liberty ends and lawlessness begins. Let us be sure that, when we begin to ignore the commandments of our God, then and there somehow liberty *does* end and judgment begins. The bitter degradation and sorrow of six thousand years, which sprang from a single seemingly harmless transgression, and from which they have not yet fairly escaped, should teach women that much at least. The laws of God will

have their vengeance upon the transgressor. And speaking in the church, though it have as fair and pleasing a look as the fruit of Eden, will surely prove to be, not for honor and profit, but for shame and disaster.

This chapter will conclude with some brief statements on three minor points of interpretation, having chiefly practical bearings and value:—

First, Silence in the church, though literally forbidding the utterance of a word, is yet shown by the inspired reason not necessarily to exclude all use of the voice, but only such as is normally and strictly designated as speaking—that in which the *individual* as such engages in some vocal exercise for the edification of the assembly. This does not forbid *concert exercises*: for in these the assembly is not in any way subjected to an individual—no individual is addressing it—but the *assembly itself* appears as acting. The reading of Scripture and singing by the congregation are clearly lawful. A choir with female voices even though in the singing of solos, does not seem to be objectionable. There is, however, an individual service of song that may be excluded (I Cor., xiv: 15, 26).

We can not undertake to indicate the application of the law to all possible circumstances. There may easily arise cases of theoretical and practical difficulty—cases where the present illumination of an obedient mind by the divine Spirit is the only sure key to a right knowledge of duty, and where

one who is disposed to quibble and evade a hearty obedience can do so with a fair show of reason. It seems to be God's plan to make the boundary line between right and wrong so slight in appearance that a disobedient spirit can always find an excuse for doing wrong, so that an obedient spirit is essential to even an outwardly right life. But the truly obedient will choose the safe path. And the church, if it shall scrupulously obey the Lord's behests where they are plain, will doubtless find that, in duty as in truth, "all things hang together in one;" that the plain ways will let in light upon the dark ones; and that he who wills to *do*, shall find the promise verified that he shall *know* the will of God. The Spirit will lead it into all the truth.

Secondly, the apostle exhorts women, if they wish to learn anything, to ask their own husbands at home (I Cor., xiv: 35). These words of the Lord Jesus (vs. 37) have been made the butt of much flippant jesting and ridicule by thousands whose professions should make such blaspheming impossible. As to the meaning, a reverent and open mind will undoubtedly find it sufficiently obvious.

In the first place, every Christian wife ought to have a Christian for a husband. In nine cases out of ten it is her own sin and disobedience to Christ (II Cor., vi: 14; I Cor., vii: 39) if she has not.

Again, the wife ought to love and honor her husband above all other men. If she does this, she will prefer him to other men for conversation and

comparison of notes on religious themes. And, without question, there are chances for misconstruction if a woman *conspicuously* prefers even a pastor to her husband in such matters. But the popular judgment upon a conspicuous preference of this sort, voices—does it not?—a popular conviction that such a preference, whether conspicuous or inconspicuous, is not “just the thing.” When it is said that a woman is “running after” a pastor, or other man, it is not complimentary, but contemptuous. Do not such extreme cases give us a hint of the propriety underlying and suggesting the apostle’s words when he refers women to their husbands?

But if, unfortunately, the husband is incompetent, it will speedily be understood between him and his wife that she is excused from consulting him on such points, and that she should directly consult her pastor. In such case, she takes her husband’s advice in not consulting him. The same freedom may result from considerations of convenience or custom. In all such cases, and indeed in all cases where there is real occasion for it, and where the rudimentary impropriety of a wrong preference is wholly wanting, a wife is as free as a single woman to consult whom she will.

The direction is given to wives because *as a rule and normally women are wives*, and because those who are not married are in general subject to parents or guardians to whom their inquiries will be addressed as matter of course. Wives, also,

having attained to maturity of years and of understanding, are more likely to act independently, and so are more in need of a positive suggestion as to the true course to pursue. Those without husbands will of course gain information by such means as are fitting and available. And so should wives. But in the case of wives, there is this also to be borne in mind, which does not belong to other women:—They should remember that they *are* wives and be true to their husbands in heart and in conduct.

That any such direction was given as to “ask * * * at home,” seems to have been necessary only to make it very plain that woman’s gifts are not to be exercised “in the church.” Asking of “their own husbands,” simply carried out that idea. The thought of loyalty to their husbands is only incidental to the main purpose of the passage.

Thirdly. The reconciliation of the *oneness* of men and women in Christ (Gal., iii: 28), with *diversities of social functions*, is made plain by the following extract from the comments of *Godet* on I Cor., xi: 3:—

“Must we conclude from the term used by Paul that the Christian wife has not also Christ for her head, in respect of her eternal personality? By no means; salvation in Christ is the same for the wife as for the husband, and the bond by which she is united to Christ does not differ from that which unites the man to the Lord. * * * But from the

standpoint of the *earthly manifestation* and of *social position*, the woman, even under the gospel economy, preserves her subordinate position. There will come a day when the distinction between the sexes will cease (Lk., xx: 34-36). But that day does not belong to the terrestrial form of the kingdom of God. As long as the present physical constitution of humanity lasts, the subordinate position of the woman will remain, even in the Christian woman. As the child realizes its communion with the Lord in the form of filial obedience to its parents, the Christian mother realizes her communion with the Lord in the form of subordination to her husband, without her communion being thereby less direct and close than his. The husband is not between her and the Lord; she is subject to him *in the Lord*; it is *in Him* that she loves him, and it is by aiding him that she lives for the Lord. If from the social standpoint she is his wife, from the standpoint of redemption she is his sister. Thus are harmonized these two sayings proceeding from the same pen: 'In Christ there is neither male nor female,' and, 'The husband is the head of the wife.'"

CHAPTER VI.

THE RESTRICTION GENERALIZED.

I Tim., ii: 8-14—" (8) I desire therefore that the men pray in every place, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and disputing. (9) In like manner, that women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with shamefastness and sobriety; not with braided hair, and gold or pearls or costly raiment; (10) but (which becometh women professing godliness) through good works. (11) Let a women learn in quietness with all subjection. (12) But I permit not a woman to teach, nor to have dominion over a man, but to be in quietness. (13) For Adam was first formed, then Eve; (14) and Adam was not beguiled, but the woman being beguiled hath fallen into transgression."

This passage, parallel in its main features with that in Corinthians, has a distinctive character of its own. It combines precision and clearness of statement on some points with a harrowing general impression of vagueness to the casual reader, which probably means that the mind of the reader and the mind of the Author are not entirely at one as to the doctrine inculcated. Indeed, it is a text that presents, even to the studious interpreter, some temptations to the formation of hasty and superficial judgments. There seems, however, to be no real uncertainty as to the meaning. We find in it the simplest and most general statement of the law that should govern women in their relations to men un-

der all circumstances, public and private; in the home and in social life, as well as in public assemblies. It is the divine ideal of the limits within which true womanliness in thought, feeling, and action has its largest and normal development. It is the *generalization* of the restriction imposed on women by the law of their sex.

1. *A distinction between the sexes is clearly indicated.* This is not plainly apparent in the old version, but it comes out in the Revision. The apostle in verse 8 prescribes a duty for "*the men*" (not simply "men," as in the A. V.), and in verse 9 turns to "*women.*" The obvious intention is to distinguish the sexes, and to indicate some duties characteristic of each.

The *men* are authorized to "pray in every place," though without an offensive self-assertion or contentious obtrusiveness. The *women* are to be modest in dress and deportment, and not dogmatic or dictatorial toward men, but quietly submissive and ready to learn—subject in spirit and in action.

Those who lay so much stress on the oneness of men and women in Christ, should remember that the same authority that declares the oneness declares also the differences.

2. *No particulars as to time, place, or circumstances are mentioned* for the observance of these requirements. There is no reference, as in I Cor., xiv: 34, to the church. We might infer from the use of the word "teach" in verse 12 that a relig-

ious meeting of the church for edification is specially designated. But, on the other hand, the passage, as far back as the beginning of chapter ii, opens as an exhortation that "supplications, prayers, intercessions, thanksgivings, be made for all men" (vs. 1); and in verse 8 the exhortation is concluded by the intimation that "the men" should "pray *in every place*." This "every place" includes, of course, the church meeting; but it does not exclude the ten thousand other places in public and social life where prayer is appropriately offered. Quite the reverse. It includes them all, and even the domestic circle. It denominates the man as the natural leader in social prayer everywhere.

There is also *no explicit reference to the duties of wives to husbands*. It is "a woman" who is to learn in quietness; "a woman" who is not permitted to teach. And the dominion forbidden is that which a woman may not have over "a man," there being nothing to show that the man is her husband. He may be, or he may not. The language is as applicable in the one case as in the other. And it says that whenever and wherever men and women meet—whenever *a* man and *a* woman meet—the prerogative of dominion and of teaching; the initiative in thought and action; the right of direction and control—is with man. The woman should from the heart acknowledge man's prerogative and her own subjection, as the ideally excellent arrangement of God for both sexes, and should quietly submit.

3. There is *no antithesis or other clearly marked logical connection* between the rule of conduct prescribed for men and that for women. It is not said or implied that, as men pray everywhere, so women are not to pray anywhere. The regulations laid down for women are not represented in any way as being the *opposite* of those for men, or as standing in any other special relation to them. There is nothing in the text to justify us in *inferring* the meaning of what is said to women from what has already been said to men. The two prescriptions are substantially independent of each other. That addressed to women must be interpreted by itself, and little or no light will be thrown upon it by the other, directed to men.

Fairbairn writes on this head (Pastoral Epistles, I Tim., ii: 9), "The connection with what precedes, indicated by *in like manner*, can not be very close. Looking to the apostle's use of it elsewhere, we must regard it as intended simply to couple the women with the men in having equally with them a relation to duty, bound to a becoming line of conduct in their own particular sphere." *Alford*, translating the connective in question by the words "So also," says of it, "It seems to be little more than a copula, not necessarily to refer to the matter which has been last under treatment."

When, therefore, women are required to "learn in quietness" and forbidden to "teach," we are not to suppose there is a primary reference, or any

special reference, to public prayer because in the preceding verses men have been instructed as to that. Prayer may not be excluded; but it is not included because it is mentioned in the preceding verses. Social prayer, since it leads and directs the minds of the auditors in their relations to God, may indeed be regarded as in a sense teaching; and the prohibition includes prayer and refers to it as much as to anything else that is forbidden, but no more. The directions to women are isolated from what goes *before*, as from the directions to bishops that *follow*, save in this, that the prescription of a rule for one sex apparently suggested the propriety of addressing some remarks to the other.

We dwell upon this point to emphasize the fact that the commands spoken to women, since they are general in form, are absolutely and unqualifiedly *general in their requirements*. They are not restricted in scope by the context. Really they have no context, and their meaning is to be derived from the inspired phraseology of the text alone. So *Alford* says (Greek Testament, I Tim., ii: 9), "It is the general duties of women, rather than any single point in reference to their conduct in public worship, to which he is calling attention." *

4. The *reason* of the rule is stated more dis-

* *Alford* thinks "the subject of public worship * * * has *not altogether disappeared* from the apostle's thoughts" in what he says to women. Of course not. General rules relative to "teaching" and "learning" must refer to religious assemblies, as well as to other appropriate occasions.

tinctly, if possible, than in Corinthians. It would almost seem as if the apostle had been specially inspired to guard us against the argument from custom, and to make it superlatively plain that the sex relation contains within itself the whole reason for the restrictive precept. The reason is twice stated, first, by the use of the word subjection, and, secondly, by the reference to the creation of our first parents. "Let a women learn in quietness with all *subjection*. But I permit not a woman to teach. * * * For Adam was first formed, then Eve; and Adam was not beguiled, but the woman being beguiled hath fallen into transgression."

If subjection had alone been presented as the reason for the command, someone might have said that subjection is a *principle to be honored by practices varying with circumstances*; that "learning in quietness" is a custom—a practice that may change and pass away. And so the command would be made of none effect. To be sure, such a statement involves adding local considerations of custom to the inspired reason for the command; and so it is a misrepresentation and perversion of God's Word, a false and untenable opinion. But the apostle anticipates and flanks any such move against the perpetuity of the restriction by carrying the reason for it back to the beginning of the world. Women are bidden to "learn in quietness" because of what they are by creation; because of *essential womanhood*. Greek and Roman customs have no

part in essential womanhood. Customs may change from age to age, but essential womanhood changes not. The opinions of men as to the rights and duties of women may fluctuate; but essential womanhood, as it came from the mind and hand of God, is the ideal, to realize which in its heavenly perfection Christian women forever press forward under the lead of the truth and the Spirit of God. And that holy ideal, eternal and unchanging, *contains within itself* the reason for the apostolic requirement.

The priority of Eve in sin is also mentioned as entering into the reason. This seems to point to the permanence of the penalty pronounced upon our first parents (Gen., iii: 16). Undoubtedly it never will be entirely removed until the sin that brought it upon the race is entirely eradicated—never till all things are made new. This also distinctly announces the perpetuity of the law against women's "teaching." The priority of Eve in sin, as a reason for any rule whatever, is as pertinent now as it was in Paul's day.

5. *The nature of the restriction.* There is room for a difference of opinions on this point; and, as a matter of fact, there are differences. But we believe that, if we interpret carefully and rationally, rather than from the impulse of first impressions; and especially if we bear in mind the doctrine already announced in this volume, we shall find our uncertainties vanishing, and a clear and satisfactory

conception formulating itself in our minds. We observe,

(1) There is *no assertion of the mental dependence or inferiority of women*. On the contrary, the ability of some women to teach men is distinctly implied. "I permit not a woman to teach," would be vain legislation if there were no women capable of teaching. Whatever may be the precise idea of the teaching forbidden, we are safe to assume that it has an intellectual element, and that the apostle Paul is here giving a complimentary recognition of woman's mental powers, while forbidding a certain illegitimate application of them.

And yet, if we suppose a woman's powers to be as great as they may possibly be—as great as we know they sometimes are—and equal to the instruction of the great majority of both sexes, there is still somehow a way in which those powers ought not to be employed in teaching any man. The rule is general that a woman ought to "learn in quietness," and not "teach" a man.

(2) We may confidently affirm on general principles that this prohibition does not in any way imply that *woman's mental processes are less valid, less trustworthy, or less valuable, than man's*. There is no intimation that the wisest of women is really incapable of teaching any man; or that any man is really capable of instructing the wisest of women.

We are entirely safe, therefore, in concluding

that the teaching forbidden is not, as a superficial reading of the text might lead us to suppose, *merely* the intellectual process usually so designated. The command can not possibly refer exclusively or primarily to the mental relationship and activities commonly called teaching and learning. Appearances do not answer to realities here. Or, rather, our predilections of judgment are toward the partial that is most apparent, instead of toward the perfect truth a part of which is not so obvious. God does not require us to believe, as at first seems to be the case, that the mental operations of a woman of broad intelligence and culture may be improved upon by any masculine booby. God has not set male ignoramuses to teaching thoroughly cultivated women. A woman is not required to think so humbly of her own mental judgments that she must regard them as inferior to those of any man. No nor yet to those of the wisest of men. A woman's mind, whatever else may be said about it or about her, is as free and independent as man's, subject to the same laws of development, amenable to the same conditions in the exercise and cultivation of its powers. As in our relation to Christ, so in relation to human learning, there is no male and female, but all are one. It is this independent humanity of woman's mental processes, among other marks of a responsible personality, that constitutes her a help *meet* for man, as counsellor, companion, and friend.

And yet the fact remains that there is a sense in

which every woman is forbidden to teach any man; in which every woman is required only to learn of men. And that, of course, irrespective of mental capacity and culture. She should observe these regulations in her relations with men because they are men, and because she is a woman. And, we may add, she should do it cordially and from the heart, because she thus honors, not men alone, but herself, her womanly calling, and the God who made her a woman and laid these rules upon her.

We premise, therefore, that women, though differing somewhat from men in their mental processes, are equal with them in the certainty and value of their conclusions; that they are thus competent to teach men in the strictly intellectual sense, and that in that sense, therefore, they are not required to be learners merely. Precisely what the objectionable teaching is we may gather by continuing our exclusion of things which it is not.

(3) There is *no law forbidding a man to seek information of a woman* at his pleasure. There is no limitation upon men with respect to learning of women. If they wish, they may do so. They violate no law by so doing, not even the law of self-respect, since woman is morally man's equal. If there were any humiliation to a man in receiving instruction from a woman, it would arise, not from the fact of *receiving* it, but from the fact of the woman's superiority and ability to *give* it. The superiority being admitted, it is manly and Christian and sensi-

ble for him frankly to acknowledge it, and to seek to make the most of it for his own mental and spiritual advantage. And this is equally true whether the woman is or is not his wife, and whether the subject-matter be religious or secular. But the man's right to seek is null unless woman has a right to respond. Since man may ask for information, woman may give it. In other words "a woman" may speak didactically to "a man," if he wishes her to do so.

But if one man may seek instruction from a woman, another may, and another, and another, and so on indefinitely. They may all seek the same information from the same woman. There is no obvious reason why they may not proffer their request simultaneously and in a body, or why she may not respond to all at once and irrespective of their numbers. But if the number of those seeking is considerable and indefinite, they constitute a public assembly; and thus out of man's right to profit by a woman's wisdom arises woman's right to speak in public assemblies—the right to prophesy foretold by Joel.

But we observe further that that the assembly thus originating is *voluntary*. It is of the type by which woman's right to prophesy was illustrated by the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost—that type which owes its existence wholly to the unconstrained freedom of man. In other words, it appears that, so long as men are free to re-

ceive or not to receive, they may seek and women may give instruction irrespective of the numbers of those to whom she speaks. In the purely intellectual sense of the word she teaches them — she lectures or preaches to them — but there is no violation of her subjection because they are not subjected to her. She has no legal or moral hold upon them. They listen but at their own good pleasure. She serves them, but does not dominate them, in giving them the benefit of her knowledge, experience, wisdom. Such teaching is not forbidden, but is definitely permitted. (Joel, ii: 28).

But the teaching forbidden in the letter to Timothy is objectionable because it is inconsistent with due subjection on the part of the woman. She is to learn “with all subjection.” “I permit not a woman to teach, nor to *have dominion over a man*” (vs. 12). The apostle evidently has in mind something that may appropriately be termed teaching which is not consistent with man’s perfect independence. But there is a *giving of instruction* which is consistent with man’s independence and woman’s subjection, and which is not therefore included in the prohibition. Men are not forbidden to seek or to receive instruction from a woman, and where man’s will remains wholly free, woman’s right to prophesy is but the crowning function of the Helper’s ministry.

We can not think there is any restraint upon such

exercise of woman's teaching gifts. That "sons" and "daughters" alike may prophesy, is but the divine proclamation, answering to the deepest instincts of the human reason, that of all the gifts of mind and heart, of natural endowment or of culture, of thought or speech, God has vouchsafed to women, not one has been branded with the seal of secrecy; not one has ~~not~~ been marked for private use; not one for women alone. But all are for the church of Christ and for the world. And women are free. Their thoughts and voices are unchained. That dark suspicion is a shadow from the past—there is no taint of unfitness or impropriety in woman's freest exercise of all her powers. It is as womanly as it is manly and Christian to proclaim to all men the alleviation of human misery, the salvation of Christ. And the greater the numbers, of men or women, who may be brought to hear that blessed message, from woman's lips or man's, the better it will be for those who speak and for every interest of humanity. And the more faithful and ready women may be to employ their prophetic gifts; the more amply they respond to their opportunities of speaking for God—just so much the better and the more beneficently shall their usefulness, their Christliness, and their womanliness be illustrated to the world.

We have noted the result when man's free will institutes the occasion for the exercise of woman's teaching gifts: Let us now consider the case

(4) When the *occasion originates in some outside authority*. This is the case, discussed in the preceding chapter, where man is morally obligated to attend upon the meeting and listen to the speakers. God only can impose such an obligation, and he has imposed it, so far as we know, only with reference to two public institutions—the church and the state. This obligation, as we saw, subjects the men upon whom it rests to the duly authorized speakers in the regular institutional assemblies. Hence in such assemblies women are forbidden to speak, since it is against man's headship and woman's subjection that men should thus be subjected to women. And the church or state that gives women the right to speak in its assemblies makes women teachers of men in a different sense from that already noticed where men are themselves the free originators of the relation. Here they teach men of right and with authority.

This, we think, is what the apostolic precept prohibits—teaching and having dominion over a man. The word teach in Greek is *didaskein*, the present infinitive active of the verb *didasko*, to teach. But the present tense of the Greek verb denotes, not alone the abstract idea of the verb, and not the instantaneous or single act; but the act *repeated, continued, or habitual*. "I permit not a woman to teach," means, therefore, "I permit her not to *be teaching*," or to hold the position and exercise the functions of a teacher. Women may not be set over men as teachers over pupils.

In this view teaching and having dominion are but different characteristics of the same relation. It is as though it had been said that women should not *teach with authority*, or *have authority as teachers* of men. It is plain that the authority specially referred to is that which is coupled with and expressed by teaching. Learning in quietness is the antithesis of teaching *and* having dominion. Speaking in church meetings is thus plainly forbidden, since it is essentially both a teaching act and an exercise of dominion. The fact that Timothy was a Christian pastor (I Tim., i: 3-5; iv: 6) is also favorable to this view.

But speaking in the church, or in institutional assemblies, while included in the prohibition, does not by any means exhaust its meaning. The command is general. And, while forbidding the *public* institutions to subject men to women, it also forbids "a woman" to hold an authoritative teacher's relation to "a man" in the *domestic* institution—the family—or to seek or to desire to institute such a relation anywhere. It is the law of God for women in all the relations of life. It is the divine ideal that should control, not only the conduct, but the thoughts, feelings, choices—the whole spiritual life—of women. It is the fundamental law of womanhood's helpmate relation to manhood, viewed on the side of its limitations.

We have seen the result when *man's* will institutes the relation of teacher and taught, and when

the relation originates in some *outside authority*, as the church. Let us now notice the case where

(5) *The woman herself takes the initiative.* And if we dismiss from consideration the instances in which she does this by a mutual agreement or understanding and in which men appear as welcoming if not seeking instruction, the relation becomes one where woman seeks to communicate, but man is indifferent or passive—a very different case from that in which man takes the initiative in seeking information or advice, and one which, in view of the natural infelicities of human dispositions and tempers, may easily lend itself to arbitrary dogmatism and dictation. And especially is this true in the relations of individuals, where the subject-matter of discourse consists, as a rule, not of the abstract truths of religion, but of concrete questions of right and duty, of expediency and policy. In domestic life, above all, the close identification of interests and the importance attaching to the practical details of counsel and management, together with the ever-present jealous sensitiveness of the personal element, and the unavoidable liability of the husband to errors in judgment and action, to thoughtlessness, and even at times possibly also to a taint of selfishness—all occasionally conspire to present a peculiarly trying temptation to the soul of a capable woman. It may not improbably sometimes seem to her, and it may often be true, that she alone could make the domestic machinery move

more smoothly; and she is tempted to "put her foot down," tell her delinquent lord "what's what," and try to gather up the reins into her own hands.

Now while it is unquestionably true that in the intercourse of rational beings, and especially of those for whom love has dissolved the conventional formalities of etiquette, there must ever be room for the largest freedom of discussion, for differences of opinion, and even for moderate cataclysmic disturbances; it is also true that God has set bounds for us all, within which we should find the limits of our freedom—a law that serves, not only to restrain, but also by restraining to keep us true to the holy ideal he has set before us. For women the distinctive law is subjection. That is her womanhood, her womanliness. And it says to her relative to temptations like that noticed in the last paragraph, "Let a woman learn in quietness with all subjection. But I permit not a woman to teach, nor to have dominion over a man, *but to be in quietness.*" It may be hard to endure some things; but it is better quietly to endure, than to rise in revolt against God and man, and against her own womanhood. And heart patience, or quietness of spirit, is often the surest panacea for the lesser ills and aggravations of life; often a wellspring of comfort and happiness amid severer trials; and always the mark of a noble and heroic soul when maintaining a consistently right course under difficulties.

The meaning of this divine precept, in its more

private and personal bearings, seems thus to be, that women should not set their wills against men's in the way of dogmatic instruction or of practical dictation. They should not *assume* the attitude of teaching or directing men. They should remember man's dominance, their own subjection, and should honor the relation in their deepest hearts wherever they meet with men, whether their husbands or other men, in the home circle or in the freer intercourse of society. They should do this, not with a humiliating sense of an inferiority which does not exist and which the relation does not imply; and not with a defiant resentment as though they were bowing to an odious but inevitable imposition, which they are not; but with a frank and whole-hearted acknowledgment that it is the woman's path of service to her God, which it is. They should realize that it is their womanhood's glory and happiness to rest in their womanly estate, and to bow acquiescent to the will God has placed over them. They should not enter into a contest with men for the mastery or for the maintenance of their own rights; they should rest their rights in the will of men, and "learn in quietness." They should recognize man's primacy in all practical relations—his right to leadership, to precedence in action, to direction and control; his right to have opinions of his own and to have them prevail whether woman approves or not. The teaching is, that women should honestly accept their subject state in all matters

of thought, expression, and action, and in all the relations of life.

Quietness, however, is not to be confounded with silence. Whether it implies silence or not will depend upon circumstances. There is such a thing as quietness in speaking, and such a thing as an obstreperous silence. The quietness required of women is a becoming acquiescence and restfulness in subjection. As we have seen, it forbids speaking at all in the church, or in any institutional assembly, because such speaking is necessarily a prerogative of headship, rather than of subjection; of manhood, and not of womanhood. But in the free intercourse of domestic and social life, and in voluntary assemblies, learning in quietness consists in the cordial acknowledgment, in thought, feeling, and action, that she is subject to man's authority; and in that loyal helpfulness, not alone of compliant performance, but also of wisdom in counsel and of the cultivation and use of her intellectual and moral endowments, in which is to be found in great part the power and beneficence of woman's work in the world, and which every right-minded man ought to wish for in the woman who walks at his side.

This command, addressed to the church through Timothy, one of its pastors, is thus the *generalization*, or universal form, *of the restriction* imposed on women, and especially on the exercise of their teaching or prophetic gifts, by the fundamental law of their sex.

It is, at the same time, an illustration of the facility with which divine wisdom may enunciate a principle to which obedience shall, according to circumstances, require even precisely opposite courses of action—the circumstances lying, however, as they must, not in extraneous considerations foreign to the text, but in the explicit statements or necessary implications of the sacred text itself. For subjection, while recognizing in the fixed relations of the church, established by divine law, the grounds for a requirement of silence; yet finds in the freedom of domestic and social life and in the authoritative sanction of the dominant sex, together with a general scriptural doctrine of liberty, an open door to the unrestrained exercise of woman's prophetic gifts. But it is to be observed that, in the establishment of this particular principle and its varying applications, the divine Lawgiver has left small scope for inventive interpretation, having guarded every point with infinite precision and care.

It is also noteworthy that this *latest* utterance of inspiration on the subject of women's prophesying is not only the completion and rounding out of the divine doctrine—it is also substantially a republication of the *earliest* inspired statement on the subject. But there is this remarkable difference in the two statements, that they approach the doctrine from opposite points of view. Joel declares the "daughters shall prophesy," it being tacitly and as a matter of course implied that their proph-

esying shall be that which is appropriate and becoming to women. Paul states the limitation arising out of the essential fact of womanhood, generalizing it in such form that it necessarily implies the corresponding liberty beyond the point where the restrictive principle ceases to be applicable. Joel stamps the obverse, Paul the reverse, of the divine teaching; and the Holy Spirit, having thus given it the seal of heaven as a finished and standard coin of the realm, has sent it forth to a beneficent currency in the markets of the world.

Having completed our discussion of the texts primarily designed and adapted to set forth the mind of God on the subject of women's prophesying, it becomes almost superfluous to dwell upon those that bear only indirectly and incidentally upon it. There are few such passages that deserve more than a mention.

In the *Old Testament* we read of Miriam, who led the women of Israel in their chorus responsive to the song of deliverance sung by the men (Ex., xv: 21), and who seems, like her brothers, to have been anointed with the spirit of prophesy (Numb., xii: 2); Deborah, the judge (Judges, iv: 4); the prophetesses Huldah (II K., xxii: 14 ff) and Noadiah (Neh., vi: 14); Athaliah, the usurper and queen (II K., xi: 3); of a "wise woman" of Abel (II Sam., xx: 16 ff) of the "damsels playing with timbrels" (Ps., lxxviii: 25) in the sanctuary (vs. 24); of the

"singing women" "in the house of the Lord" (Ezra, ii: 65; I Chron., xxv: 5, 6), and the "great host" of women "publishing the tidings" of national victory (Ps., lxxviii: 11; Judges, xi: 34; I Sam., xviii: 6, 7).

There is here nothing that demands notice but the case of *Deborah*. Respecting this we observe:

(1) Deborah apparently *did not wield a civil authority* over the tribes she is said to have judged. Barak was recognized by her as the real head and commander. She did not herself undertake to lead the people against Jabin; but she delivered to Barak the word of the Lord commanding him to lead them (Judges, iv: 6, 7); and in Hebrews (xi: 32) Barak is mentioned among the judges to the exclusion of Deborah. Her authority was undoubtedly rather that of a prophet than of a civil ruler. And while it is certain that the distinction was not then so marked as it afterward became, it is still true that Deborah recognized Barak, as Samuel recognized Saul, as Nathan recognized David, as Isaiah recognized Hezekiah.

(2) Deborah does not appear as having a connection with the tabernacle service at Shiloh (Judges, iv: 5; xxi: 19), or with any stated forms of worship.

(3) Deborah became the virtual leader of the campaign against Jabin by reason of the cowardice and incompetency of Barak and the demoralization of the people (Judges, iv: 1-3). Barak refused to go to the war unless Deborah would accompany

him—which, as Josephus intimates, was in effect proffering her the command of the army. And, having taken the field, the people, including Barak, “were so frightened” at the numbers and armament of the foe, “that they wished to march off at once, had not Deborah detained them, and commanded them to fight the enemy that very day” (Jos. Ant., v: 5, 3).

(4) Barak played but an inglorious part in the campaign. He appears rather as a warning than as an example to men; as an object of contempt, rather than of admiration. The visible presence of a woman of courage and character was a stronger support to his frail manhood than the word of God himself. Deborah told him the campaign would not be to his honor (Judges, iv: 9). Josephus says (Ant., v: 5, 3) that, in reply to his request for her presence, “she answered indignantly, Thou, O Barak, deliverest up meanly the authority which God hath given thee into the hands of a woman.” Barak was chief among those “forty thousand” abjects in Israel, in whose hands no “shield or spear was seen,” though “war was in the gates” (Judges, v: 8); one of those “rulers” who had “ceased” in Israel, “until that I Deborah arose” (vs. 7). It is to be hoped, for the credit of humanity, that there were not many who, like him, could take pleasure in sounding abroad the proclamation of their own ignominy (vs. 1).

On the whole, it seems we are justified in classi-

fyng Deborah's part in the political and military events of her time (against her own inclination as it was, and against the express directions of God to Barak through her), as one of those unnatural and, to the people, disgraceful facts visited upon them in reproof of their spiritless condition and lack of faith in God. Isaiah centuries later mourned the degradation of his people by the words, "Children are their oppressors, and women rule over them" (Is., iii: 12).

The *New Testament* has many references to women, most of which have been used as more or less favorable to women's speaking in the church by recent uncritical and, we must say, very careless writers. But none of them are of any force as against the doctrine of this volume; and most of them are quite irrelevant to any doctrine as to women's prophesying. We notice them because of the part they have been made to play in the popular discussion of the subject.

The aged prophetess, Anna (Lk., ii: 36-38), "spoke of" the new-born Savior "to all them that were looking for the redemption of Jerusalem." Her speaking was no part of the temple service, and it does not appear that she spoke in any public meeting. If she did, it was at the most in voluntary gatherings of the devout and spiritually-minded remnant of the chosen people, like those mentioned by Malachi (iii: 16). Jesus directed certain women (Matt., xxviii: 10) to deliver a message to the dis-

ciples, there being no probable reference to any formal meeting. Philip, the evangelist, had "four daughters, virgins, which did prophesy" (Acts, xxi: 9). Under what circumstances they prophesied does not appear.

The only passage in the New Testament that has even the semblance of being equivocal is Acts, i: 14—"These all with one accord continued stedfastly in prayer, with the women," etc. These words prove that women were present in the company of the apostles, but not necessarily that they *led the assembly* in vocal prayer. That they did is not asserted, and whether they did nor not, never can be certainly known, any more than it can be certainly known, that *every man* of the one hundred and more habitually present led the assembly. It is not probable that all did lead. The apostles were the chief leaders, and it is more likely on general principles that the vocal exercises were conducted by less than half of the whole number present, the others joining silently. The apostles, as the witnesses specially selected and instructed by Christ (Lk., xxiv: 44-53), would naturally lead every meeting and take a large proportion of the time. That was not the day of "sentence prayers and testimonies;" and in a company of 120 people animated by Jewish sentiments, and with Jewish practices and precedents before them, it is probable that but a small proportion of the whole number present would be heard in any one meeting, and exceedingly improbable that the women would speak at all.

But, on the other hand, it is by no means impossible, perhaps from one point of view not improbable, that the apostles encouraged women to speak. It is certain the women would not have departed from their traditional reserve without great positive encouragement. And the apostles, knowing how the Lord had honored these very women, welcoming their companionship and ministrations (Lk., viii: 2, 3); knowing—perhaps having been specially taught by the Lord—that women were to have a better place under the gospel than they had ever had before; and knowing of the old-time prediction of Joel—may have thought that the hour of the fulfillment was come, and that this was the opportunity, for the introduction of the new regime. Just so, a few years later, the leaders of the Corinthian church dragged women out of their wonted reticence into a public indecorum (I Cor., xi: 16), and perhaps into speaking in the church meeting (I Cor., xiv: 37).

But if for any cause the women led in prayer in the meetings in the "upper chamber" (Acts, i: 13), that fact has no force as a precedent for Christian churches. The apostles were not then, as they come to be a few days later, clothed with divine authority and wisdom to settle the usages of the church. They were fallible men like ourselves; and they made at least one mistake, in supposing that temporal power was about to be restored to Israel (Acts, i: 6). Who shall say that they did not make others?

Phoebe was a "servant," or *deaconess*, of a church (Rom., xvi: 1). "There were deaconesses in the Christian church during the first century," says *Schaff* (Popular Com., Rom. xvi: 1), "their duty being to take care of the sick and poor, and of strangers, in the female portion of the churches. The rigid separation of the sexes made this the more necessary." They also had duties in connection with the baptism and instruction of female converts. Phoebe had been serviceable to the apostle and to many others by personal ministrations, and she engaged, either habitually or by apostolic commission, in "matters" that entitled her to the assistance of the churches (Rom., xvi: 2). But the evidence is all against the idea that the deaconess was ever regarded by the apostles or by their successors as coördinate in authority with the deacons, or as having any official authority whatever in church business.

Prisca (or Priscilla=little Prisca) is mentioned before her husband as a "fellow worker in Christ Jesus" (Rom., xvi: 3, 4) with the apostle, and as one for whom "all the churches of the gentiles" give thanks. But the work of the apostle was to save sinners. And, while women might be counted as fellow workers of the apostle if their labors had exclusive reference to his temporal necessities and to the demands of private charity; we think it very doubtful if such work would have been so conspicuously and so honorably mentioned as were the

"labors" of a goodly number of Christian women. It seems far more probable that they were notably active and efficient in Paul's own work—in personal labors to win men and women to Christ. They did not speak in church meetings. There is no evidence that they ever spoke in any public way. That is a singularly foolish conception as to the apostle's intelligence, to say nothing of his inspiration, which supposes him to be here virtually contradicting and repudiating a doctrine stated so emphatically a few months earlier to the Corinthians, and repeated with equal emphasis a few years later to Timothy.

It had not come to pass in those days that "speaking in meeting" was the only Christian work worth mentioning. Indeed, though the assembly has its place in the edifying of the body of Christ, the labors of Christians then were chiefly hand to hand and heart to heart work, and not cheap holiday talk. It was a personal grapple with the sins and unbelief of individual men and women for the conquest of the world. Such work, no doubt, is meant as we read of "Mary, who bestowed much *labor*" on the Roman church (Rom., xvi: 6); of "Tryphæna and Tryphosa, who *labor* in the Lord" (vs. 12); of "Persis, the beloved, which *labored much* in the Lord" (Id.); and others. Mention is made elsewhere (Phil., iv: 2, 3) of Euodia and Syntyche, "who *labored with*" Paul "*in the gospel.*"

It is worth while for us to pause an instant over the significance of this list of names. We do not need to be reminded by it that Paul was the preacher, not of an impotent gospel, but of a gospel of vitality and power, of aggressions and of conquests. But it tells us distinctly that the silencing of women in the churches was *not* the paralysis of Christian work, or the death blow to woman's usefulness in the church. It reminds us of the fact that no apostle, or other Christian worker, ever thought more highly of women, or made more of their coöperation in his work, than did Paul; that none ever found a broader avenue to the hearts and consciences of women, or a readier and more liberal response to his demands upon their time and strength for the service of Christ. And we know that Christianity, with all its glorious conquests, has never shown one-half the power, over either men or women, that it did when cast, in the person of the apostle Paul, an atom into the ocean of heathenism. It was mighty to save because it was true and heralded by an uncompromisingly true man. The false and mawkish sentimentalism, so popular nowadays, which says in substance that a Christian woman can do no wrong, and that she ought to have everything she sees fit to ask for, was *not* one of the arrows in the apostle's quiver. And those modern preachers, who handle the Word of God so lightly, and the principles of logic so indifferently, that they may pay a doubtful compliment to women

and enhance woman's usefulness, would do well to take a lesson in ministerial efficiency from Paul. For his experience teaches, what all sensible people ought to know without teaching, that the best compliment to women, and the surest way to command their respect and their allegiance to Christ, is to recognize the fact that they equally with men are sinners, to convict them of their sins, and to require them to forsake them "in His name."

And, in general, it ought not to be a difficult conception for Christians to grasp or to assent to, that the methods of the Spirit and Word of God are the methods of ideal efficiency in Christian work. The idea that modern Christianity, or modern women, have progressed beyond the anticipations of the Most High, or in other words beyond the prescriptions and adaptations of the written Word, is pure nonsense and pure infidelity, as is also the notion that those prescriptions and adaptations were mere matters of local custom—the proprieties of an age now long past and long since outgrown. It is Christianity, and it is Protestantism, to believe that the New Testament is an all-sufficient rule of faith and practice for all Christians *forever*. It ought to be the deep-seated conviction of every Christian—the first and spontaneous impulse of our faith in God—to take it for granted without question that the writings of the apostles are God's own revelation of the ideally best ways of doing Christian work, and to assume as infallibly certain that obe-

dience to the letter and spirit of those writings, as the intention and scope of each part is made plain by the writings themselves, is now, as truly as ever in the past, the only certain highway to success. And there is no reason why the precepts relative to women's prophesying should not be thus implicitly welcomed and obeyed save such as is found in the depraved tendency of human hearts to prefer Custom to the Word, and self-will to God's will.

CHAPTER VII.

WOMAN'S SPHERE.

The Scripture doctrine as to women's speaking in public assemblies has an important bearing on the subject of woman's sphere. This is a subject which our forefathers a hundred years ago and more apparently supposed to be definitely and forever settled. To-day there is a very prevalent impression that the forefathers were mistaken. But just how far they were mistaken, and just where the boundary line between truth and falsehood should be drawn, is not so plain. Public sentiment is in a state of transition, in which the revolt against the narrowness and errors of the past is clearly marked, but the apprehension of the larger truth is still vague, tentative, and undefined.

The *old idea* was that the sphere of woman is in the home, with a certain latitude in the direction of unostentatious helpfulness in the church and in private charities. The new doctrine opens to the sex a wide range of coöperative public activities—precisely how wide, and by what principles the extension of privilege should be regulated, there is no obvious agreement among its advocates. From the conservative, positively indorsing nothing beyond

woman's public work for and with women, to the radical, who unhesitatingly declares for equality in all civil and ecclesiastical functions, there is a continuous blending of opinions. Perhaps the most popular view at present is that which would grant all religious privileges except the pastorate of the local church and all civil rights except the ballot. But in this movement as in all others the radical has the advantage. His enthusiasm, his positive convictions, his confidence in the righteousness of his cause and in a near victory, are steadily prevailing against more moderate views, and carrying public sentiment to the extreme "equality" doctrine. Many states in the Union have already granted a partial suffrage, two at least have removed all restrictions, while among the more numerous Protestant denominations women preachers have been ordained and settled as pastors.

It is difficult for one occupying the point of view of the word of God to judge which is nearer right—the old doctrine or the extreme new. The old certainly is safer; but it is just as certainly wrong. The equality doctrine is dangerous not only because of its vital aggressiveness, and because it is striking at the foundation principle of all social order—the sex relation—but also because it ignores, nay, develops a very decided tendency to scout and scoff at the only fundamental and authoritative law upon which the social fabric can securely rest, namely, the Word of God.

But the doctrine that woman's sphere is wholly in the home is also unscriptural. No doubt the best of it is there; and no doubt in an age of ignorance, violence, and adverse public sentiment it may rightly and wisely be conceived of as wholly there. But God's Word, regarding the world as illuminated and renovated by the Spirit of truth, does not so conceive of it. They are to be "keepers at home," to be sure, but more than that. They are also called to be "laborers in the gospel, prophets of the grace of God." Ideally, and in an age like the present of liberty, enlightenment, and peace, there seems to be no good reason why women should not use their gifts freely beyond the domestic circle. On the contrary, we believe there is good reason why they should.

The *great need* of the present hour is a scriptural doctrine—one that shall steer safely between unreasonable extremes, avoiding, on the one hand, the timid conservatism of the past, and, on the other, the rash empiricism of the present; giving to us an adequate recognition at once of every real right of women, and of every restraint imposed by the law of their sex—a doctrine that shall clearly combine a detailed practical serviceableness with theoretical soundness. We believe the preceding chapters have prepared the way for the statement of such a doctrine.

We have seen that the Scriptures do not restrict women to the home circle and to domestic duties;

but that there is a broad range of activity opened before them in connection with public assemblies. We have seen that women not only may, but surely shall, as God's word is sure, receive in the latter days a divine call, qualification and opportunity to proclaim the way of salvation publicly to the multitudes of the earth. And not only so, but they shall hear and heed the call, in such numbers and with such effect that, even in the distant perspective of Old Testament prediction, women's prophesying appears among the leading and prominent characteristics of the new era; among the great and world-wide fruits of the Spirit. We have also seen the limitation, due to the fact of sex, which the Scriptures prescribe to the exercise of woman's prophetic gift.

Now it is fitting that we illustrate and emphasize the practical bearings of this doctrine by showing in a general way what it means for women; how it affects the sphere of their normal activities. It will be necessary, first, to state the Scripture doctrine in outline as to woman's sphere; and, secondly, to note the effect upon it of the doctrine as to women's prophesying.

I.—Woman's Sphere in General.

A material sphere, or ball, is a fit emblem of completeness; and hence we designate the sum total of the functions and duties belonging to a particular station in life as the sphere, or sphere of

action, of those occupying that station. By woman's sphere we mean the part in the world's work assigned by the Creator to women.

We have seen (ch. iv.) that woman was created as a "help" to man, and that she is, accordingly, subordinate to man in will and in the sphere of her work; and we have seen that the New Testament confirms this doctrine, by proclaiming man's headship and the subjection of woman, and illustrating the relation by that subsisting from eternity between the Father and the Son, and by that between Christ and the church, both these relations, by the express declarations of Scripture, involving a subjection in will and in work. We have seen that the subjection of woman is no more a badge of dishonor or of inferiority than is the subjection of Christ to the Father; that woman as a "help" is a wife—the equal companion and friend of her husband; and that they two are one in a deep and incomprehensible sense resembling somewhat the unity of the holy Trinity, and as one they enter into humanity's work.

It now devolves upon us to notice some of the general principles bearing upon the distribution of the world's work on the basis of headship and subjection, with a particular reference to the sphere of the helper.

1. *Woman's sphere implies man's sphere*—a range of activity belonging to man; a circle or sum total of masculine duty; a work belonging to man as

man. As man stood in the garden, the commission to humanity was his alone. He was not equal to it. He needed help. And help was given in the form of a woman. With that help he could do all—he could complete the circle of human duty—he could fill his sphere. And woman was created to help man in his normal sphere.

But suppose man departs from his true sphere, and ceases to be true to his duty as man: should woman help him in his sin? Should she become a sinner because he does? Assuredly not. An unholy life; a life inconsistent with man's duty as man, in just so far as it is wrong, involves a forfeiture of the help alike of God and of woman. A woman's duty is first to God, to do his will. She has no right to violate the laws of God; no right to help a man violate them; no right to give her influence to the support of sin, worldliness, selfishness. God appointed her to be the helper of one who is worthy of help; one whose life work ought to be made successful. Her help should be upward, or it is no true help.

The Savior, while announcing the profound unity of those who are joined in marriage and the indissoluble nature of the bond (Matt., xix: 3-7), yet declares the responsibility of the individual soul to God to be paramount even to that:—"If any man cometh unto me, and hateth not his own father, and mother, and *wife*, * * * he can not be my disciple" (Lk., xiv, 26). The religious bond is above the marriage bond.

Christian scholars and all Christian people hold this opinion with more or less of distinctness. *Fairbairn* states it in his comment on I Tim., ii: 11 (Pastoral Epistles):—"The *all subjection*, however, can only be understood to reach as far as the authoritative teaching is of the right stamp. Woman does not lose her rational power of thought and responsibility by abiding in the place assigned her by the gospel; and she also has a right to prove all things—only in a manner suited to her position—in order that she may hold fast that which is good, and reject what is otherwise."

Woman is not a blind slave, but an intelligent subordinate; and the law of her subordination is, that she help her husband *in his normal sphere*. Her sphere is to help him in his sphere. But if he depart from his sphere, she is to that extent released from obligation, unless it be the obligation to help him back to the right way. In such case there is imposed upon her as a Christian an unfortunate and most distressing and difficult question of duty—namely, the drawing of the boundary line between loyalty to her husband and loyalty to her Lord.

(1) Man's sphere, like woman's, is one of subjection. The apostle Paul, enunciating the doctrine of creation as well as of the gospel, says, "The head of every man is Christ." Created as children of God, redeemed by a great price, we owe him filial service. We owe it in the sum total and in every part of our lives. The relation of man to Christ is like

that of Christ to the Father, and of woman to man (I Cor., xi: 3). As, therefore, Christ came to do his Father's will and work, man's sphere is to do Christ's will and work, and woman's sphere is to help man serve Christ. This conception of man's sphere is stated by *Godet*, writing on I Cor., xi: 3: "Every man is ordained to believe in Christ and to take him for his head, that is to say, to become a *Christian* husband."

(2) A man who is not a truly regenerate and obedient child of God—a true Christian—has no sphere. Or, rather, he is wholly out of his sphere. He has not even been born (Jn., iii: 3, 5) into manhood's true sphere. He is "dead" to God "in sin" (Eph., ii: 5). A Christian woman might as well hope to attain to her true sphere by being chained to a corpse as by being married to such a man. His life, in its very best and purest morality, is wholly against Christ; wholly a renunciation of the will and work of Christ; wholly without Christ as its "head." And the better that life may be, the more effectually does it negative and undo Christ's work on earth, by its mere omission to receive Christ as its Lord and Master. A true woman can help such a man only by going against the whole current of his life. This, common sense and the divine law forbid her to undertake. Christ has commanded his followers, whether men or women, to abstain from entering the marriage relation with persons not Christians (II Cor., vi: 14); and women

in particular are required, if they marry, to marry "only in the Lord" (I Cor., vii: 39). A woman cannot fill her sphere, unless man fills his. (See McGhee on Eph., v: 22.)

2. Rationally it is self-evident that where two independent wills are to unite in the doing of one work, there must be some recognized agreement or *authoritative provision determining the precise method of coöperation*. Otherwise there will be friction and discord. The spheres of the partners must be accurately defined, and the relations between them definitely settled. Partnerships, corporations, governments, organizations of all sorts, are a practical exemplification of this truth, and of the various methods of coöperation found available. There must somehow be a subjection of individual wills to a central unit of authority. This principle is illustrated even in the Godhead. The work of God is accomplished by the coöperation of the persons of the Trinity acting as one; and this unity in action is compassed by the subordination of the Son and the Holy Spirit to the Father. And precisely so the unity of humanity is compassed by the subjection of the wife. Respecting this subjection we observe,

(1) It comprehends all that enters into woman's life. "As the Church is subject to Christ, so let the wives also be to their husbands *in everything* (Eph., v: 24). Supposing the husband to be, what he ought to be, subject to Christ in will and work;

the wife should be subject to the husband in all things—in every exercise of her will and in all her work. As *Pattison* (Eph., v: 24) says, "This *in all things* is, of course, to be modified by the higher obligation to Christ. The wife is not bound to commit sin to please her husband; for Christ is head, and the husband under authority. But she is to please her husband *in all things* which do not conflict with the will of Christ. Her own judgment in matters of domestic interest, her preferences and tastes, are to be subordinated to his, not supposing his necessarily right and hers necessarily wrong."

McGhee expresses this doctrine (Eph., v: 22), "Whenever the authority of man clashes with the authority of God, man's authority is to be postponed to that of God. * * * In all other cases obedience is a duty."

This duty of subjection in everything is a wholesale condemnation of modern opinions and practices. That subjection which extends to everything requires a woman on becoming a wife to surrender herself and her every earthly interest unreservedly to her husband's absolute control. All is henceforth no longer her own, but his only forevermore. She is his, and what she has she "brings to" him. When she reaches the point of deciding to say Yes to the momentous question that resolves her destiny, she should recognize in the utterance of that little word the signal for the closing of her independent

life—an honest closing of it, that is not vitiated by the guarding of her personal interests, her property or other rights, against her future husband. If she can not trust him sufficiently to make such unconditional surrender; she can not trust him enough to become his true wife. If for any cause she is not willing thus to resign her independence in all things; then she is not willing to become a true and faithful wife. If she is not ready to promise to obey, she has not the spirit of a true wife, and her assumption of the relation is a mockery. For "*as the church is subject to Christ, so let the wives also be to their husbands in everything.*" Not otherwise may the two be truly joined together and become "one flesh."

(2) The practical difficulties arising from the twofold subjection of woman—first to Christ and secondly to her husband—are reduced to a minimum when the marriage relation is constituted upon right principles. If the husband fills his proper sphere in subjection to Christ, Christ's will becomes his will; the spirit of Christ, his spirit; and the presumption becomes very strong that he will be temperate and just and Christian in all his demands—that he will require nothing that Christ would not in his place require, and therefore nothing that a Christian woman should not wish to do. There is not, can not, naturally, be a constant conflict of authorities to perplex and distress her. She may rest in quietness and peace of soul, being

assured that in helping her husband she is serving Christ, and doing the work which He has appointed her to do.

This is precisely the doctrine of Eph., v: 22—"Wives, be in subjection unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord." Says *Schaff*, "The meaning is not, 'as the church yields to Christ,' nor yet, 'as you yield to Christ,' but rather, 'regard your duty to your husbands as duties to the Lord.'" It is not your husband primarily that you serve, but Christ. *Bengel* on the same text writes, "The subjection which is rendered by the wife to the husband, is at the same time rendered to the Lord Christ himself." (So *Meyer*, *Hodge*, *Jamieson*, *F. and B.*, *Alford*, etc.) It is to Christ alone really that she is subject, even while doing the wishes of her husband: for, as *McGhee* says, "All authority that is delegated by God, is to be honored for God, and honored as God's appointment." A man's faults, mistakes, and idiosyncrasies may be annoying and disastrous; the wife may see and deplore them and the consequences; but so long as they are in the lower sphere, and so long as she has confidence in his loyalty to Christ and rectitude of life, she should love and honor and help him with loyal and undivided heart, because that is just the task her Master's loving will has assigned to her to do *for Him*. The husband's loyalty to Christ is the ground of the wife's happiness in helping him. It is the Christian philosopher's stone that enables her to transform her

wifely duties unto the pure gold of an acceptable thanksgiving to God.

3. Subjection coëxisting with equality, or inferiority in certain respects with equality on the whole, implies the *superiority of woman to man in some respects*. It implies a superiority in some directions sufficient to offset the particular inferiority that makes her subject. Women are subject because they lack the qualities—muscular fiber and force, for example—that belong to headship. But Nature is rigorously impartial and just. What she withholds in one direction she makes up in another. *Hodge* has expressed this idea (Com., Eph., v: 23): “The superiority of the man, however, is not only consistent with the mutual dependence of the sexes, and their equality of nature and in the kingdom of God, but also with the inferiority of men to women in other qualities than those which entitle to authority.”

We may not be able to define precisely wherein the superiority of woman consists, and it is not necessary that we should. The most valuable of our treasures are often those not admitting of exact analysis and description. It must be evident to the least discerning mind that women are specially characterized by some qualities of mind and heart that the world needs for its happiness fully as much as it needs man's distinctive functions. Authority, or rational headship, with all that it implies, is not more essential or more important to

the well-being of mankind than are those gentler graces and virtues that adorn womanhood. Men and women are equal; but man's prerogative stands as the rough framework and protecting shell of the house, while within are the woods of finer grain, and of superior costliness and beauty—subjected, but ministering far more directly to the æsthetic, moral and spiritual cultivation of the inmates. We may not define, but we can recognize and honor, the qualities that make home the sweetest spot on earth, and that surround the names of mother, wife and sister with a halo of heavenly light.

Henry, in his commentary (Gen., ii: 21), having spoken of the obligation of the sex and of wives in particular to observe "humility, modesty, silence, and submissiveness," proceeds, "Yet man being made last of the creatures, as the best and most excellent of all, Eve's being made *after* Adam, and *out* of him, puts an honor upon that sex, as the glory of the man, I Cor., xi: 7. If man is the head, she is the crown; a crown to her husband, the crown of the visible creation. The man was dust refined, but the woman was dust double refined, one remove further from the earth."

The delicacy and refinement of woman's physical organization is at least typical and suggestive of those qualities which in the aggregate constitute the distinctive characteristics of womanhood, and in which are to be found the points of woman's

superiority to man—the points, therefore, that primarily determine her adaptation to the work of life, her distinctive sphere of action. Her physical weakness alone would forbid the supposition that her peculiar gift is in the direction of government. And that, together with a peculiar combination of physical and spiritual graces, seems to point to a predominance of the affections. It may, perhaps, in general, be alleged that woman supplements man as the heart supplements the head; and that, while man loves as well as woman and woman knows as certainly as man, yet there is a sense in which man's superiority to woman may be summed up as *rational*, and woman's superiority to man as *affectional*, the former being coupled with authority, the latter with subjection. But the best of all earthly gifts and graces is love (I Cor., ch. xiii.); and in the predominance of the affections woman finds that moral loveliness by which she conquers. Her power lies, not in a self-asserting will or reason, but in the potent spell with which God has endowed womanly beauty, piety, grace, and devotion. She will, accordingly, find her true sphere of usefulness, not by entering into competition with men where they are strong and she is weak—not by the contest of wills and of dogmatism—but by cultivating and exemplifying to the world in voluntary acts of devotion that womanliness in which the heart of Christ finds its supremest earthly expression.

Woman was given to man to help him by doing for him a part of the work he could not do for himself; and, as adapting her to this work of helpfulness, there was given to her a nature that man did not possess—a peculiar combination of qualities superior to anything of the kind in man's nature, supplementary to man's natural dowry, and constituting, with it, by the union of man and woman in marriage, one complete human unit—one flesh. The natures, like the spheres, are supplementary. The spheres are supplementary, because the natures are.

4. The *excellence of this doctrine* is apparent from the nature and beneficence of the marriage bond, and from the security it affords to every real interest and right of women.

(1) *Nature of the marriage bond.* The unity of husbands and wives is established, not only by an ordinance of God and by a law of nature, but also by the most powerful personal attraction known to human kind—the love of man for the woman of all women to whom his heart pays its homage; and of a woman for the man chosen of her before all men. The love that sees but One among all created beings; that constitutes the sum of earthly bliss for Two in their mutual recognition and welcome; that makes the twain one forever in heart and life—this is the spiritual element, the real bond, of marriage. It is incomparable among the moral forces that rule the actions of men. The foundation principle of

the family, it is also the corner stone of civilization; the essence of patriotism; the mainspring and reward of ambition and enterprise; the soul of art; the inspiration of poetry and romance; the sum of all that is sweetest, most beautiful, and best, in our earthly life.

This love—best of our earthly blessings—is the ordinance and gift of God, sanctified of God to our happiness and usefulness. But this bare statement is not half the truth. We shall surely fail to catch the beauty and beneficence of this holy relation if we conceive of it as the offspring of chance, and as entirely accidental and uncertain in its results—if we regard marriage as a lottery, and happiness as merely a lucky turn of the wheel. Love may be blind, to a certain extent; but God is not blind. And, as the true sphere of all men and women is in the service of Christ, so each one of the Lord's children should find his own particular sphere, and his own particular love—his mate—direct from the outstretched hand of the Father. God has promised to direct the paths of those who trust in him (Prov., iii: 6), and to order the steps of a good man. With what blessed restfulness and assurance, then, may we expect that He, who searches all hearts, and turns them as the rivers of water are turned, will make, from among all the multitudes of the earth, the selection of that One whose love may be dearest, and whose life may be most helpful to us, in His service. With what confi-

dence may we expect that in his own good time, which is the best time, He will bring forward the chosen One; will introduce him in the most unequivocal manner; will join the hands and hearts that are nevermore to be sundered; and will crown the union with the blissful consciousness that their happiness is one of the perfect gifts of a heavenly Father's love. So marriage, if it be on the true plane, is raised above the uncertainties of worldliness, into the rest, the peacefulness, and the absolute certainty of the life that is hid with Christ in God. The woman who finds her husband in this way may take her place—may make the unconditional surrender that the law of God requires—without a fear or a thought as to the consequences. Her Master has led her. He will also keep.

God has also declared the nature and the degree of the love that husbands should have for their wives. And we know that this declaration is but a transcript of the real nature of a true man's heart, as God made man's heart, and as Christ makes it by his transforming, sanctifying grace. "Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself up for it" (Eph., v: 25). *Hodge*, commenting on this passage, says, "Christ so loved the church as to die for it. Husbands, therefore, should be willing to die for their wives." "It cannot be doubted that true conjugal love will ever lead the husband to sacrifice himself for his wife." This is the very nature of love—not to

please itself, but to deny self for the sake of gratifying or benefiting the one loved. And the husband's love for his wife should be, and with good men undoubtedly is, without stint. It should extend to a self-renunciation in all things, for the sake of pleasing, honoring, protecting, the wife, as complete as that by which our blessed Savior bought salvation for us. "Even so ought husbands also to love their own wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his own wife loveth himself: for no man ever hated his own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as Christ also the church; because we are members of his body. For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife; and the twain shall become one flesh" (Eph., v: 28-31).

This love of husbands for wives is not, however, to be confounded with subjection. The husband's duty of loving and cherishing the wife does not give the wife a right to claim his services as love would spontaneously prompt him to render them, and as a husband may rightly claim the services of his wife. The wife is subject to the husband; the husband is subject, not to the wife, but to the law of love. If, therefore, a wife should think to take advantage of her husband's love by way of selfish dictation, he is not bound, as she would be if the case were to be reversed. He ought to love to the uttermost; but she can not claim as a right what love would freely offer. There is no other subjection of the

husband to the wife, but such as is comparable to the subjection of parents to children, or of masters to servants, which seems to be nothing else but to love them and to treat them with loving kindness, in the due performance of the duties of the relation.

But, on the other hand, selfish dictation and domineering on the part of the husband is contemptible and brutal in the last degree. For him, who ought tenderly to cherish that "weaker vessel" which God has intrusted to his care, and whose love ought to prefer her pleasure and happiness above his own, to take advantage of his superior strength to play the petty tyrant is cowardly and unmanly—a base misrepresentation of Christian headship. There are times of rare occurrence when the husband may be justified in employing the imperative mood toward the wife of his bosom, as in moments of great and sudden danger when life or safety may hang upon instantaneous and efficient action. Such occasions are clearly typical of the marriage relation. We see then instinctively, in most cases, that the man is the born leader and commander, and that the woman's duty is obedience. Possibly a husband's authority may also at times find legitimate scope in imperative mandates to protect a wife against her own excess of zeal in a good cause. But, in general, it is only the selfish weakling who takes pride in the ostentatious display or needless exercise of authority. The spirit of Christian manhood is the Christly spirit of self-sacrificing care for the interests and happiness of the wife.

(2) This doctrine furnishes the only security possible for women's real rights. Women are safe, if at all, not through the strength of their own frail arms, or by the assertion of their wills, by voting, or by any or all things they can do; but in the strength and the love of men.

What can a woman do to protect herself against a husband who is disposed to persecute her? The assertion of her will is but fuel to the flames of his wrath and of her own suffering. She can escape only by leaving him, or by a change of heart on his part.

And what can a woman do in society by way of asserting and enforcing her rights? Do we not know that the freedom of women in these days is wholly due to the fact that *men* have changed their minds as to woman's place? The gospel has opened their eyes, so that now they see, as the men of past ages never have seen, that Christ grants women the largest social equality with themselves, even to the right of proclaiming salvation to the multitudes. It is not because women have perceived their rights and have conquered them, that they now rejoice in these privileges; but because men, the masters of the world, have chosen freely and without constraint, save that of justice and the love of Christ, to grant this liberty. And it is true to-day, and ever must be true, that what men freely grant to women will be the measure of women's possessions, and that what men withhold women

will not have and can not by any possibility win for themselves. God has placed authority and power with men, and subjection to authority with women, and it is not in the power of women, or of the universe in arms, to change this order.

The helplessness of women may be illustrated by a hypothetical case, which is not all hypothesis. Suppose the machinery of government turned over to be administered by them, without the help or coöperation of men—what would they do with it? The power some of them have craved is now theirs. They hold the magic spell of the ballot and of official authority. Now, according to promise, all wrongs should be righted and all evils done away. But do we not assuredly know that one day of such rule would turn all government into everlasting anarchy? All the women on the continent could not bring a single lively male criminal to justice. And if, out of good nature, he should let them try him, the chief apprehension of sedate judges and jury-women would be, that he might *not* get away, or that they might find him under their bed, or in some other disagreeable place. The fact is, all human government and authority rest on physical force, as well as upon moral right. The hand that holds the helm of state must be ever ready to back its mandates with the thunderbolts of war, or it will fall paralyzed and impotent.

This physical force women lack. They can not help themselves. They can not add one feather's

weight to the force by which governments are maintained, or detract a feather's weight from it. They can not help themselves to the ballot; and, if men give it to them, they can not add one particle to the efficiency of the laws their ballots may help to secure. They can not win for themselves, or for the furtherance of any cause, the exercise of a single jot of authority or power that is not the free and unconstrained gift of their husbands and brothers. The efforts of women to help themselves by getting their hands upon the machinery of government reminds one of a child with its hands upon the reins of a spirited horse. He almost thinks he is driving. But the master hand behind him really holds the reins; and the child would be frightened out of his wits if the father were to leave him to manage the animal alone.

Aside from the question of Christian obedience, and regarding the subject from a practical point of view, it is a question of most serious moment to women at the present time, how they may best command the strength by which their own rights and the best interests of the community are to be conserved—in other words, how they may best assure themselves that men will be most loyal to a right cause. There is a choice between two courses. They may recognize and honor the strength God has given to men; that is now, ever has been, and ever shall be, man's, and never can be woman's, in any part or parcel of it; and they may use their

reason and their prophetic gifts to lay upon men a sense of their responsibility and to induce them to act in the premises. Or, they may express their distrust of men, avow contempt for men's inaction and indifference, declare the opinion that men never can or will do anything, and direct their efforts toward getting the management into their own hands. They may choose to *trust* in the power that must do for them; or they may choose to *distrust and repudiate* it. They may rest in the love God has given for their protection; or they may pour contempt upon it.

The result of these two courses of action can not be doubtful. The love of men for women is conditioned upon the faith of women in men; precisely as the complaisant love of God for man is conditional upon man's faith in God. We must trust God, or God's love will be debarred from pouring out its richness of blessing upon us. And just so in the parallel relation, submission and trust are the means by which women command the avenues to men's hearts. If they choose to be independent, and to trust only to their own exertions; as a personal matter, men will not say them nay. But as for loving and respecting them, as men ought to love and respect true women, and as men wish to love and respect women—it is as impossible as it is for God to reveal himself to defiant rebels. By such a course women cease to be womanly, and in just so far as they are committed to it and controlled by it,

they become objects of pity and of contempt, rather than of loving deference. And they will get their deserts, as surely as the infliction of the penalty follows the violation of nature's laws.

But on the other hand, if women shall have the faith they ought to have in God and in men; and if they shall pursue only those methods of action that are consistent with a womanly sphere; they have all the guarantees the nature of the case admits of that their interests will be secured and the objects of their desire accomplished. Women should not forget that they owe their present social freedom, and all its benefits, to the fact that men have recognized and honored the law of their God, and granted freely what women never could have won for themselves. And if the benefaction seems to be as yet imperfect, and if men seem to be behind-hand with their duty; there is still room for serious question if women are not themselves chiefly to blame. So long as the social favors of women are bestowed without any observable regard to the distinction between virtue and vice; and so long as professedly Christian women in great numbers are continually entering the marriage relation, against the law of God and against reason, with men who make no pretensions to godliness:—women are in no position to complain of the shortcomings of men.

But this is not the worst. By the spirit and pretensions of the modern "equal rights" doctrine, women are guilty of an immeasurably worse

treason against their own womanhood and against manhood than men as a sex have ever been known to commit against women. Men, and especially Christian men, are not in the habit of making infidelity to the marriage vow a principle of religion. But just that is what women are doing to-day by this craze after "equality." Let them renounce that shame. Let them remember that they are women, and that God has made subjection to be of the very essence of womanhood. Let them remember that the headship of man is not only divine in its strength and its authority. It is also divine in its thought of woman. In Christian men it is the love of God jealous even to death for the honor and well-being of women. It is worthy to be trusted. God made it to be trusted, and he made woman to trust it. If women shall but half do their duty; but half deserve the love of men; they will find it to be to them all that they can desire, and to every right cause all that could reasonably be expected.

There is nothing in all human literature that begins to set so high a standard for the love of men for women as He sets up who created man's heart, in that he compares it to the love of Christ for his church. How often and how wonderfully the comparison is made. "It is said of Zion, 'As the bridegroom rejoices over the bride, so shall thy God rejoice over thee' (Is., lxii: 5). He is to present it to himself as his own peculiar joy." The

object of Christ's death "was to purify, adorn, and render it glorious, that it might be prepared to sit with him on his throne" (Hodge, Eph., v: 26, 27).

Let us reverse the picture. As in all this Christ's joy is that of the bridegroom, or the husband (Is., liv: 5), so the joy of man in woman is like that of Christ in the purchase of his blood—the church. This must be, or the opposite would not be the wonderful truth it is represented to be. It is man's joy above all things else earthly to love, to bless, to glorify, his wife, that she may be united with him in the equal enjoyment of whatever of power, or fortune, or happiness he may acquire—that she may "sit with him on his throne."

This is God's guarantee of the security and happiness of women in their appointed sphere—the creation of man's heart to dominate and direct his will and the exercise of his strength; the enkindling of a love, like that of Christ, which joys to sacrifice itself that it may do for her who loves and trusts him, and also for all women. Far from perfect, it is yet the prescription of divine wisdom and love; and it will prove its excellence just in proportion as men and women shall be loyally true to Christ, to themselves, and to each other.

II.—Woman's Sphere and Women's Prophesying.

The Word of God is the only authority competent to decide what classes of practical duties belong to woman's sphere.

Nature, the fitness of things, the adaptations of woman's powers, are valuable in a subordinate and supplementary way. But there is too much of sentiment, passion, prejudice, and sin connected with the discussion of the subject to admit of allowing to these considerations, or to the testimony of history, a primary and decisive authority. Even the facts of observation and experience are of comparatively little value as primary evidence. It does not necessary follow, because from time immemorial women have been mainly interested in domestic duties, and apparently most fitly so, that woman's sphere is characteristically and exclusively domestic. What has been is not necessarily the sum total of what ought to be; and neither does it furnish any infallible data for arriving at what ought to be. Woman's domestic work, so far as reason or experience are competent to decide, may be the whole or only a fractional part of woman's ideal sphere. We turn, we must turn, to the testimony of divine wisdom on this point—to God's own interpretation, in the written Word, of his creative act.

The *Great Commission to Humanity*, prototype of the great commission to the church, marking out the main lines of man's useful activity, is found in Gen., i: 28:—"And God blessed them: and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it; and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth." With respect to this we remark,

I. It was *addressed to both sexes alike* and without discrimination. "God said unto *them*," etc. This makes them, so to speak, tenants in common of humanity's heritage of rights and duties. That is to say, Eve had an undivided half interest in them all, as truly as Adam had. The illustration is not perfect, but it illustrates the point before us, that woman's interest and calling extend to the sum total of the world's work.

It does not follow that both sexes have the same relation to that work. The second chapter of Genesis shows that it was given to man as principal and to woman as helper; to the two regarded as a social unit. And neither does it follow that the work is the same in detail for both sexes. It is the same only in general outline; but in detail it is distributed according to the respective natural endowments of men and women. As man is interested in domestic duties, so is woman; but man has his part and woman hers. So with reference to subduing the earth. So also with reference to having dominion over the living creatures. The command to do these things was addressed to women, as truly as to men; as truly as the command enjoining domestic duties was addressed to women. What does it mean? Naturally, that woman's normal sphere is *conterminous with man's*; that, not only in the home, but outside also, wherever man has a field of action, woman has one, parallel and supplementary to man's. The head and the helper are one, and together they enter into *all* of the world's work.

2. To "*subduc the earth*" is more than to cultivate the soil. It implies a mastery of all the forces of nature; a harnessing of them, as man harnesses the horse and the mule, to make them useful servants. It means a delving in the ground to make it disgorge its treasures for man's use—its coal, salt, iron, oil; its gold and precious stones and all minerals. It means the investigation of the properties and adaptations of all things with a view to developing their utility—their largest fitness to subserve man's need and to accomplish the purpose, in the broadest sense, for which God made them. So it means the creation of many sciences, and the application of science in invention and manufactures. It means the distribution of all products to meet the demands of all peoples; and, to that end, the production of the means of communication and transportation between distant points—telegraphs, telephones, railroads, steamboats—and traffic by these means; trade and commerce. It means the cultivation of the human mind itself to the point of knowing and justly estimating the diverse needs of soul and body, and of grasping and manipulating the means of supply—it means education to the uttermost, and not only that which is intellectual and manual, but also the æsthetic, moral, and spiritual. It means coöperation for the protection of all in the exercise of their natural rights—life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness—it means laws, governments, military establishments and discipline. We

must suppose that, to a being created for God and finding in God the true explanation and motive of life, subduing the earth would mean making it most effectually tributary to man's service of God. So it means the study of God and of the relations between God and the universe of mind and matter; theology; religion. It means making the most of self and of the world, not for self, or for the world, but for God. It means this for man; it means the same thing for woman. It means it for man as head; for woman as man's helper (Murphy on Genesis, i: 28; Pulpit Com., Id.).

3. The *command is twofold*, enjoining, first, the *propagation of the species*, and, secondly, the *subjugation of nature*. The former is specific, and relates specially to the sphere of the home and of domestic duties; the latter is general, covering, as above noticed, all phases of public activity.

Both of these obligations rest equally upon both sexes. If it be thought that women are interested only in the first, there is quite as much reason to suppose that men also should be interested only in that. To assume women's lack of adaptation to the work of subduing nature, is simply making our ignorance the measure of truth; and the ignorance and lack of comprehension of the subject is in this case very conspicuous. For women are plainly adapted to some forms of public activity, as school teaching, clerking, book-keeping. We may go further and assert that if women may be supposed

to find their *best* work in the home, there is precisely the same reason for supposing that men also may find their best work in the home. The perpetuation of the species is the only specific duty mentioned, and it seems thus to stand alone among the earthly privileges and duties of mankind, superior in importance to all the rest. But if it is so for women, it is equally so for men. And is it not self-evident that giving life and character to an immortal being, for weal or woe, is incomparably the weightiest responsibility that rests upon a human soul, whether man or woman? While, therefore, we may concede the superiority of domestic duties for women, we find that they have the same preëminence for men, and that the subjugation of nature is of secondary importance for both sexes, though obligatory upon both.

4. The *practical duties falling to women* by reason of the commission to subdue the earth are indefinite in number and in kind. As various and manifold as are the lines of human thought and action, and with a constant and unlimited tendency to increased differentiation, so are the possibilities of woman's work. There are no obvious limitations to be prescribed; no evident principles by which the diversification and multiplication of woman's activities are to be restrained. We know that there are kinds of work specially adapted to women's powers; and other kinds peculiarly appropriate to men. We also know that there is a dis-

tinctively masculine sphere of action, and a feminine. But with some exceptions, such as this volume seeks to define, there is no very apparent line of demarcation between them, and no self-evident reason why one should be drawn. As a matter of fact, the inspired penman has not drawn such a line, or suggested the propriety of drawing one—which fact remands the whole subject to the tribunal of reason and experience, and leaves the field open for all comers, irrespective of sex, to test and prove their powers at their pleasure. Nature, then, and long experiment will furnish an index finger of expediency, but no imperative *law* of distribution; and there will be freedom for the individual to follow the bent of his own mind.

In such case, woman's sphere will be found in helping her husband as best she may; the needs, the opportunities, and her abilities, suggesting the methods. It does not appear that any such service is beyond the legitimate boundary line of womanhood's calling, however far it may be removed from the domestic circle. And if a woman is unmarried, we know of no reason why her qualifications and inclinations should not be allowed as free play as man's in the choice and pursuit of a vocation. There is no sex in a majority of worldly pursuits, and woman's sphere is differenced from man's with reference to them only by differences of natural endowment, and by her voluntary assumption of the duties of wifehood. (But on this head see Fernald's

recent admirable book on "The New Womanhood").

5. The Scripture *doctrine as to women's prophesying is the crown and completion of this doctrine of creation as to subduing the earth.* As prophecy is the highest and best of the spiritual gifts (I Cor., xii: 28), and so of all gifts; and as the bestowal of the best is the pledge of all (Rom., viii: 32); so the conferring of the right to prophesy on women is the divine token that woman's sphere, like man's, extends to all the length and breadth of the world's work. She is not going beyond her sphere, *even* when she engages in public prophesying. God himself has declared her right to prophesy, and he gives her the Spirit to inspire her utterance; and he has not done more than that for man. It is her sphere, as truly as it is man's sphere. It is her sphere as helper; it is his as head. And the right to prophesy is the certificate of God to women that their sphere is hand in hand with man's wherever man has a sphere of action; that Helper and Head are together in all the work of humanity—in church, in state, and in society, as truly as in the home—everywhere, and not alone in a single department.

And this signifies that woman's work is no bare compliment to women; not simply an honorary and useless appendage to man's work, a merely ornamental by-play; but an essential element in the world's work. Woman was created for a helper—created to help because man needed help; be-

cause there is a part of his work that he can not do alone—can do only with woman's help. And the help needed is not merely in the sacred ministries of the home, and not merely in the lower grade of those activities by which man asserts his dominion over the world; but also in the higher grades—in the intellectual, moral, spiritual; even in those, highest of all, by which man stands before his fellows as God's accredited representative, proclaiming amnesty and pardon in Jesus' name. Even in his prophetic labors man needs help; and especially in these woman has been designated his helper. As man himself is incomplete without woman,—but a broken segment of humanity; as “he feels that a part of *him* is away from him, until he obtains her” (Woman as God Made Her, by J. D. Fulton, p. 7); so in its totality man's work for God and for mankind is but a fragment until it finds its counterpart and completeness in the work of the helper.

6. Prophesying, however, while crowning the world's work, and showing that woman's sphere is as broad as man's; has a nature peculiarly its own distinguishing it from most other forms of human activity. It is a work with a distinctive character *calculated to illustrate the sex relation*. It is a relative work, and that not as all work is relative to those for whom and among whom it is done; but in its own essential nature. A man may plow a field or make a clock if there is not another person

within ten miles; but he who prophesies must have hearers to whom his message is delivered. There must be a speaker, and some one or more to listen, or there is no prophesying.

This relation between prophet and auditor is, as we have seen (p. 189), one in which there is independence on one side and subjection on the other. Whether the speaker is independent or subject will depend on circumstances; or, more specifically, upon the constitution of the assembly. The people who are morally free to meet or to refrain are independent and he who would speak to them must conciliate their good will or fail of a hearing. Thus in the voluntary assembly the speaker is subject. But where, as in the church, the people are morally obligated to assemble, the speaker has his audience guaranteed—subjected to him by the authority of the law of God that convokes them.

Hence the right to prophesy proclaims woman's sphere to be not only conterminous with man's, and equal to his in the dignity and importance of its work; but also, at the same time, different, precisely as woman differs from man; as subjection differs from headship; as the voluntary assembly differs from the institutional. Woman's sphere, therefore, is not identical with man's, but parallel with it—a companion and supplementary work. And it is to be noted that this differencing of woman's sphere from man's comes out into prominence especially in the higher classes of activities.

If we conceive of women as called to assist men only in the lower and mechanical portion of the work of subduing nature, there is no apparent reason why the two spheres should not be regarded as identical. There is no obvious reason, for example, why a woman should not go into the field, hoe corn, and carry her row with her husband, if she can, and if Providence seems to point to that as the true line of her helpfulness. But when we rise to an intellectual plane, and especially when we rise higher into the realm of moral and spiritual action, the law of sex comes in and designates men and women to different duties. The higher we get the greater is the difference in the duties. When we reach the highest, the difference is greatest. And just as in the rearing of children, fathers and mothers move in different worlds; so in this other transcendent work of prophesying, manhood and womanhood are honored by action on almost entirely distinct and different lines.

It is impossible for us to pursue this discussion into each of the several departments of human industry and show that the sphere of the helper is there. And it is not needful. The world and women themselves are to-day translating the doctrine into action everywhere about us. Women are finding their sphere in many fields, and laying claim to its supreme prerogative—the right to prophesy. We will simply call attention to a single conspicuous illustration.

7. The helpmate sphere has place in the arena of *politics*, and its work consists very largely in prophetic activities—public speaking; the promulgation of right principles of thought and action. There is a work in politics which men at their best can not do; a work which women can and must do, if it is ever to be done. Some of the proofs are as follows:—

(1) The *ability* to contribute to the formation of a right public sentiment on political questions, argues the right and the duty, unless there are clear reasons to the contrary, which there are not. The right to prophesy is general, and all the world's work, rightly conceived, is for God. The state is as truly a divine institution as the church, and its policies and measures should reflect eternal truth and justice. For the universal inculcation of the principles of righteousness, everyone who has a mind and a tongue should use them by every lawful means. Women have the ability and the right to use their voices in private and in voluntary assemblies in any cause whatever. Is it not, then, plainly their *duty* to use them as best they may in a good cause?

(2) Public sentiment is the mainspring and bulwark of republican institutions, and *women are half of the public*. Women's sentiments are the half of public sentiment. And, so far as the influence of opinions is concerned, it is not clear that men have greater weight than women, wherever women have decided convictions. And no one can doubt

that it is the duty of women to have decided convictions in favor of all that is right, and against all that is wrong. So, as a matter of fact, live women *are in politics* in spite of themselves. They are in politics very conspicuously on the temperance question to-day. And they are responsible for having an influence on such questions. Men can not exert a personal influence for women. That is something they must do for themselves, or it will not be done. So it is evident that woman's sphere extends to politics. They have a work there that is all their own, and that men can not by any possibility do—the work of having right convictions and of exerting a right personal influence. It is also within women's peculiar province to hold meetings of their own, and to organize, for the systematic promulgation of their convictions. Men can not do that for them.

Suppose, now, that women were very generally agreed, and quite in earnest, in favoring any moral reform, as the abolition of the liquor traffic. Is it not plain, that in such case, even though the laws be wholly adverse, and temperance men everywhere in a minority, *public sentiment* on the whole is favorable? Is it not also evident that the law-making majority, though victorious and apparently secure, are yet in an extremely precarious condition? They are resting on the mouth of a volcano. At any moment the moral forces beneath may break forth with overwhelming power to destroy them.

The influence of the women upon their husbands and brothers and growing sons, together with that of the minority of voters, may at any moment change that minority into a permanent and stable majority.

It is within the prerogative and power of women to control influences that are always indispensable to the security, in politics and in the laws, of any right cause; and that may at any time result in irretrievable disaster to a wrong one. And that, not by way of the ballot, but by the power of right convictions and of consistent lives—those moral forces in which the real strength and security of popular institutions must ever consist.

(3) *For the sake of their boys*, mothers should be actively interested in politics.

There is no discount upon the influence of old-fashioned mothers, whose interest in public affairs was centered in their masculine representatives, and whose instructions to their boys consisted chiefly in the inculcation of the general principles of morality, religion, and patriotism. But undoubtedly mothers may do more than this. They may transmit definite tastes, aspirations, aptnesses, for conflict with political evil, they may train their sons to the championship of specific reforms; and they may follow them to the battle with the inspiration of their intelligent sympathy.

But, in order to do this, they must be actively engaged themselves. The interest that communi-

cates itself is the zeal fired by the actual stress of conflict. It is said, the mother of Napoleon Bonaparte was wont to accompany her husband on his campaigns. The genius that mastered France and laid Europe prostrate, was forged out of an actively interested woman's heart and brain amid the fire and smoke of battle. Some observer of history has made the wise remark that "Great men have generally had great mothers." But more than that is true. Nature gives to mothers the key to greatness, so that, if wise enough, they may almost at pleasure command its avenues, translating the ideals and aspirations that to other people must ever remain unrealized into the very warp and woof of the character that goes forth from them. The world has not yet half recognized the possibilities of women's power in their sons.

(4) Women should be interested in politics *that they may be better wives*—more companionable and more helpful to their husbands. This is not saying very much for most women, for there are comparatively few men who care to talk politics very much save at particular crises. But the principle is general: Men *ought* to be interested in politics; and it would help them, at times, to have their wives able to converse intelligently on political subjects.

Nothing can be said—nothing ought ever to be said—in derogation of those homely domestic tasks by which multitudes of devoted women continually attest their love to Christ and to their husbands.

But, at the same time, it should seem to be self-evident, that a man ought to wish his wife to be, rather a companion of his higher and intellectual life, than the slave to a ceaseless routine of domestic tasks, without any outlook into his world of thought and action. We are presumably past the point in the world's history when ignorance was supposed to be a womanly grace. A broad and balanced intelligence is not unbecoming to women; and (to put the matter on a low but practical plane) it does not unfit them for those more humble duties that circumstances may impose. Experience proves that it does not. And there is no apparent reason why education and a practical knowledge of affairs should not do for women precisely what they do for men—fit them the better to serve their age in any sphere of action to which God's good providence may call them. Certainly it is no objection to this doctrine that it makes women dissatisfied with living on a plane below their opportunities.

While a woman's outlook for a better usefulness is not primarily in politics or in any public sphere, but in the sacred ministries of the home; yet the field of practical politics furnishes important opportunities for devoted living and for usefulness, that should be improved, in due proportion, for their own good, for the sake of their husbands and children, for the good of the community, and for the glory of God. The Woman's Christian Temperance Union is a ready illustration of this class of work.

Two features of the doctrine of this chapter claim special notice at the close:—

1. Woman as helpmate is called to a work quite different from service to the person of her husband. It is true that the marital relation is full of mutual attentions and services, and that without them love would be impossible and marriage a hollow mockery; true that the husband's will and work dominate the wife's, and necessarily determine very largely the whole course of her life. But it is also true that a large factor of woman's work, and notably that connected with prophesying, has no direct reference whatever to man's personal needs and interests. It is "help" to man only in the sense that it supplements and furthers his Christian activities—it helps him win the world to Christ. And this is the best kind of help; that for which men should love and prize their wives the most. It is the work in which we most nearly realize the spirit and image of God. It should remind us that marriage was not intended to minister to a man's selfishness, but to his usefulness, and to his ability to glorify God in the earth.

2. Many of the privileges and duties of woman's sphere, and especially those connected with prophesying, belong to all women; to the unmarried as to the married. Joel's prediction, the "daughters shall prophesy," apparently refers primarily to the unmarried; and it signifies that, even though they have not attained to full age or to the natural sphere

of women, yet the Spirit of God is theirs in his fullness, calling and qualifying them equally with others to enter into the Savior's redeeming work. The best gifts of the Spirit are not conditioned upon marriage.

And this suggests, what we also learn from various other considerations, that marriage is not an absolute and universal obligation. The commands in Genesis are rather the indication of an ideal and normal standard, than of an imperative duty. There may be circumstances when it is best not to marry. The apostle Paul distinctly announces this doctrine (I Cor., vii: 8, 26). The "present distress" was justification of celibacy. There are, doubtless, other valid reasons. Our Savior spoke with approval of those who "make themselves eunuchs [i. e. live single] for the kingdom of heaven's sake" (Matt. xix: 12). Paul seems to have been one of this class (I Cor., vii: 8). It being lawful for him, as for "the rest of the apostles * * * and Cephas," i. e. Peter, "to lead about a wife that is a believer" (I Cor., ix: 5); he abstained that he might give himself the more completely to the work of the gospel. There may be many others like Paul. And marriage is necessarily contingent upon the offering of a qualified candidate (II Cor., vi: 14).

Undoubtedly there are many to whom it is permissible, or even in the highest degree commendable, to abjure marriage, and to devote themselves wholly to work for Christ and for the salvation of

their fellow men. The women who engage in such labors, whether they have ever been married or not, and irrespective of wifehood, are true "helpers" of all Christian men, and especially of pastors and public teachers. Paul recognized many such (Rom. ch. xvi; 1 Tim., v: 9, 10). Thus, in the higher range of public Christian service, we discover a sphere in which marriage ceases to be a controlling or significant factor—a sphere in which the Savior's redeeming work furnishes the predominant aim and motive—a sphere reminding us strongly in some respects of that other sphere, to which we all hope to attain, where they neither marry nor are given in marriage.

CHAPTER VIII.

CONSEQUENCES OF UNSCRIPTURAL PRACTICE.

The law of God is the highest utility. Disregard of any divine precept is certain to result in disaster. We may not be able to perceive precisely how the law is beneficent, or to recognize and define the baneful consequences of the violation; but we know that, as surely as God lives, a blessing follows obedience and a curse disobedience. We know that conformity to the will of God is always, and against all appearances to the contrary, the wisest practical expediency; and that nonconformity to even the slightest of divine requirements is unreasonable, unpractical, inexpedient—sure to result somehow, on the whole, in calamity and loss. The will of God is the law of nature; and no man can trample on nature's laws with impunity.

The modern practice and teaching as to women's prophesying is unscriptural in two directions:—There is an unscriptural restriction, and an unscriptural extension, of privilege. There is, first, the doctrine that women are required to be silent in all public assemblies; and, secondly, the practice of speaking in church meetings.

The consequences of forbidding women to speak

in public assemblies have already been adverted to. The puny barriers reared by men against the promise and providence of God crumble and disappear. But more than that. Happy were it for the church and for the present age if that were all. But it is not all. The pent up forces of public sentiment, overleaping the unnatural restraint, go with the wild unreasoning rush of a flood of waters against all restraints. An age of lawless repression gives way to an age of lawless freedom. One extreme succeeds to another. And thus it comes to pass that to-day the limitations of woman's prerogative of speech, prescribed by the Word of God, count for little more, to the popular mind, than the effete superstitions of heathenism. And Reason might almost as well raise her voice to stay the movements of the tides as to hope for a candid hearing on that unwelcome theme.

No practical advantage is to be gained by dwelling on the consequences of the unscriptural restriction. The wrong itself is virtually a thing of the past. The world has left behind, let us hope forever, the era of lawless oppression. Her day of liberty has dawned, never to set. And while in many quarters we still behold arbitrary power surviving and asserting its illegitimate sway over human minds and consciences; we know that it no longer has any real menace to human liberty, but that it remains, like the dismantled and decaying ruins of some old feudal castle, shorn of its terrors, and sig-

nificant only of a civilization that is dead and gone. The evils that we henceforth need to consider are those that spring, not out of an unlawful abridgment of liberty, but out of an unlawful use of liberty.

The consequences of the unscriptural extension of woman's right to prophesy—that is, specially, the consequences of women's speaking in the church—have a peculiar claim upon the attention of Christian people. The practice itself is wide-spread and aggressive. And one of the mainsprings of its aggressive vitality is in the opinion, which to those who hold it has all the self-evidencing force of an axiom, that it is *wholly beneficent in its practical workings*, and that it can not possibly be hurtful. "What can be the harm of a woman's testifying, at any and all times, what the Lord has done for her? Such loving service can not be otherwise than acceptable to God, and blessed in its results." So say the advocates. And they point to instances where God has variously blessed the speaking of women, to the conversion of souls; to the reviving of Christians; to the maintenance of prayer-meetings and of churches. The predominance of women in the attendance and membership is supposed to argue, especially in the smaller churches, an absolute necessity for them to participate in the speaking and management.

We would not undertake the bootless task of depreciating the usefulness of woman's work, wherever or however it has been done. We believe

that God has sometimes, many times, blessed the speaking of women in church meetings. But what does this prove? Not necessarily, by any means, that the practice is scriptural and right. It may be taken to prove that those whose labors were thus blessed *supposed* they were doing God service by speaking in church meetings. We can hardly believe that God would thus bless the wilfully disobedient, though he might have done even this to some extent. God's love might not be willing to allow all the world to perish even in the face of the wilful disobedience of those who profess to be his people. And so he might even bless the truth to the salvation of many, though it were spoken in conscious disobedience. This, however, is not the rule. Obedience is the normal condition of spiritual blessing.

And yet obedience is never perfect. And if God were to withhold his blessing till we were perfectly conformed to his law, our blessings would be few and far between. But God has compassion on our ignorance. And he counts the spirit and the heart as of greater moment than the outward act. And if these are right; if we live as best we may up to our light; God accepts the service and blesses it, even though there be more than one sin of ignorance in the outward life.

But however much God may have blessed women's speaking in the church, it does not appear that he would not have blessed their obedient si-

lence more. The blessing of disobedience never can equal the blessing of obedience. Sin, though it be the sin of ignorance, never can be in God's sight an acceptable substitute for obedience; never can be ideally beneficent. Along with the blessing, which God gives out of his forbearing love for the uninstructed and erring disciple, and out of his love to the church and the world, there will be found the inevitable drawbacks and demoralization which God has attached to sin even in its mildest forms, and which by their permanence will in the long run generally more than overbalance the good. It is not in God's pleasure ever to make wrong-doing profitable. And we hope to be able to make it appear that the benefits that have been named as resulting from the practice in question are not to be mentioned in comparison with the evils that multiply about it. The former are the rewards of true heart service, despite wrong and forbidden methods; the latter are the organic development and multiplication of the evil germ itself, which tends at an ever accelerating rate to the death of all spirituality and power in the church, and to the subversion of all social order.

By speaking in church meetings is popularly meant speaking in the social-religious, or prayer and conference meeting. Such speaking

1. *Results necessarily in women's speaking in all church meetings; in their participating in the management of church business; in their preaching; and*

in their becoming eligible to office as deacons, trustees, and pastors. Equality in the social meeting tends infallibly to equality in all these respects.

But there are many who believe in the former practice who steadfastly oppose women's being pastors, and who would not be pleased with the idea of electing them as deacons and trustees. The attitude of such persons is not consistent. The position they take can not be maintained in reason; and in practice it is already irretrievably lost. They may as well recognize this fact, and give over the useless expenditure of breath and effort. If the Word authorizes women to speak in any church meeting, it equally authorizes them to speak in all church meetings and to engage equally with men in all the work of the church. That this is so appears from the following considerations:

(1) There is *no difference in principle* between the simplest speaking in the social meeting, and the largest participation in the oversight, instruction, and management of the church. There is a seeming difference, and a wide difference in the feelings of people relative to it. But this is largely, no doubt, the effect of custom and habit. The difference is really but the difference between the opening flower and the ripe fruit of one parent stock. The same life principle is in them both.

The principle violated by women's speaking in the social church meeting is "subjection," the normal sex relation; the principle exemplified is

"equality." But it is nothing more than equality, when women share equally with men in all the privileges and work of the church. Nothing but subjection is violated if they are inducted into every church office.

We have already noticed at sufficient length the proof that there is nothing indelicate or essentially unwomanly in publicity, whether of teaching or of work; and that the only impropriety noticed by the inspired writers as needing to be specially guarded against in public speaking is the disregard of womanly subjection. Subjection is the only principle violated by giving women the *largest possible* share in the instruction and government of the church. And it is the express teaching of I Cor., xiv: 34, 35, that even the *slightest* and most modest question for information in the social meeting is a violation of womanly subjection. The principle violated by the largest, and by the slightest, participation in church meetings and church management is one and the same thing—it is subjection.

(2) *In practice* if women speak in the social church meeting there must be and is a *constant and irresistible tendency* toward giving them an equal part with men in all the work of the church.

There *must* be such a tendency. There are few things on earth that more strikingly remind us of the inevitableness of the decrees of God than the persistency with which an accepted principle conquers its way to the consistent practical dominance

of the life, whether of an individual or of a community. It matters not at all if the principle be accepted unconsciously or inadvertently, as the principle of equality undoubtedly is by many of those who favor women's speaking in the social meetings of the church. Principles have the vitality of immortality wholly irrespective of whether we recognize them or not. Men may resist for a time, but no earthly power can permanently withstand their tendency to self-realization. The only escape from their Juggernaut wheels is by the total rejection of the principles themselves, and of every practice in which they find embodiment.

The *actual tendency* of the practice of speaking in the social church meeting may be seen from the fact that there is *no limitation as to time*. It is always expected that one who has something to say will take the needful time, be it one minute, five minutes, or even ten minutes, or more. There is no reason why a congregation may not in exceptional cases give the whole hour to one speaker, as a returned missionary or other prominent personage. This is often done. But such speaking is essentially preaching, whether it be formally so or not. The aim is edification; the method instruction and incitement to devotion by prophesying. But, if women speak habitually in the social meeting, this absence of a limitation as to time applies necessarily to them; and in practice women are often inducted in this manner into preaching in church meetings.

But there is no peculiar sanctity in days. If such an exercise is appropriate for Wednesday or Thursday evening, it is equally so for Sunday evening. Or for Sunday morning. And so, speaking in the social meeting opens the door to officiating in the Sunday service. This is not theory alone. There are hundreds of facts to correspond.

But if a woman may occupy the pulpit on Sunday once, why not again? Why not three or four times? Why not ten times? Fifty times? Why not a year at a time? Why may she not be a pastor? There are said to be not far from one hundred women pastors over evangelical churches in the United States at the present time.

This tendency does not, of course, operate with equal force and rapidity under all circumstances. In the newer and smaller communities in the West, where the churches are small; where Christian men are relatively few in number; and where public sentiment is in an unsettled state—the barriers of usage are most easily broken down and new practices introduced. The precedents thus established, rapidly accumulating, gradually bear down the resistance of the larger and more conservative churches. and extend themselves throughout the land.

The *exigencies of church work* in the smaller churches also furnish a specially favorable field for the development of the tendency to equality. In little churches composed almost entirely of women,

where all worship and business are concentrated into a single weekly session, all kinds of church work seem to fall naturally, even almost necessarily, into the hands of women. In such churches there will often be a scarcity of men available for *S. S. superintendents* and *church clerks*. Now and then a specially devoted sister will remind the brethren that there were *deaconesses* in New Testament times; and it is easy to assume that a deaconess is a female deacon, sharing the duties and responsibilities of the deacons. Or, a wealthy sister and liberal contributor will seem to be entitled to recognition by way of being made a *trustee*. Poverty in the congregation, and the availability of an educated and talented woman, will suggest the propriety of her *reading* a sermon Sunday mornings while the church is without a pastor. No stipulation or inquisition is made as to the authorship of the sermon, and nobody cares if she writes it herself. So, almost before they realize it, they have a woman for a stated pulpit supply, or pastor *pro tem*. Such an arrangement can not last long before the question of ordination arises. But ordination is as obviously proper as the preaching itself; the shock to old "prejudices" gradually becomes less and less; the council is called; the deed is done—the tendency of the age has gained its supreme victory.

There is no rational ground for doubting that such is the universal and necessary tendency, and the inevitable conclusion, of the practice of speaking in

the social church meeting. Equality here means equality in all church work. ~ It may not follow immediately but it will come surely sooner or later in all the churches. At the present time the movement in that direction is rapidly approaching its culmination.

(3) The Scriptures give women the right to *prophecy*. But if prophesying is anything it is preaching. It was preaching on the day of Pentecost. But if prophesying is permitted in church meetings, then preaching is permitted in church meetings. And if women may preach in church meetings, they may preach repeatedly—statedly—they may be pastors. And if they may be pastors, there is no ground for excluding them from the exercise of any official trust or responsibility in the gift of the church, and equality in all teaching and governmental functions is an accomplished fact.

2. Women's speaking in the social church meeting *tends to political equality, and to all that is comprehended in the "woman's rights" doctrine.*

Participation in civil government, the possession of the elective franchise, and eligibility to office in the state, are one in principle with speaking, voting and office holding in the church. The principle is equality as contradistinguished from the scriptural doctrine of subjection. This principle, living and gathering strength in the constant practice of scores of thousands of churches, is the leaven that is transforming all the social life of the age into

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likeness to itself. And it is, no doubt, chiefly because the churches thus foster the equality sentiment that the woman's rights movement is the powerful and aggressive social force it is to-day. Let the churches withdraw their approval and give their influence consistently in favor of the scriptural doctrine of the sex relation, and that movement would speedily become a struggle against manifest destiny. The stigma of irreligion would attach to it; it would cease to command the respect of the better people of the community; and it would lose its bold and aggressive front, and go to its own place among the lawless vagaries of unbelief. The church is directly responsible for this evil.

3. The *perversion of our ideal of manhood and of womanhood* is one of the fundamental evils of women's speaking in the church.

The practice is forbidden because it is a prerogative of men, and because women ought to be subject. True manhood, therefore, is something to which speaking in the church is peculiarly appropriate; true womanhood something to which it is entirely inappropriate. If our ideals were true to the divine conception, we would *feel* the excellence of the law of silence; feel that it is womanly to be silent in the church, and manly to speak. The reason why this distinction is not now apparent is because our ideals are not true:—because our conception of womanhood is not ideal womanhood, but a mingling of womanly and masculine elements; and because our

idea of manhood is not true manhood, but manhood plus certain feminine ingredients. In other words, we have set up for our ideals an unmanly man and an unwomanly woman. This comes of substituting reason for the Word of God as our teacher on these most momentous topics.

The importance of this perversion of our ideals is to be found in the fact that our ideals rule our lives. We ever grow toward them, and tend to become like them. If our ideals are high they ennoble us; if low, they degrade us. If right, they lead us aright; if wrong, they lead us astray. The result of the adoption of a perverted ideal of manhood and of womanhood by a community or a generation of people, will be a generation of unmanly men and unwomanly women. This is the danger that lies most imminent before us in connection with the "woman's rights," or "equality," heresy. And it is already so far an accomplished fact, that the divine ideal has been lost sight of by the majority of Protestant churches of the time, and an ideal set up, by the practice of women's speaking in church meetings, which tends to the utter perversion of manhood and of womanhood.

That even Christian women have already very largely experienced the demoralization of thought and feeling—of character—consequent upon the perversion of their ideal of womanhood is painfully obvious. Why else should so many of them *desire* to win and wield the prerogative of headship—

authority over men? Why else should they resent it when a Christian teacher, nay, when the apostle of Christ himself, reproves them for speaking in the church? If their minds and hearts were right; if they had not been poisoned against the truth; if their ideal of the womanly had not been vitiated; they would instinctively shrink from all that infinite Wisdom declares to be inconsistent with womanhood, and spontaneously choose to do those things that God's Word proclaims to be womanly. Moreover, truly womanly women are not usually recklessly regardless of that which is "shameful" (I Cor., xiv: 35). It is only when they have ceased to be wholly womanly that they rashly do those things that look toward shame.

4. Women's speaking has disastrous consequences to the *social church meeting*.

The reverse of this is constantly maintained by the advocates of the practice. Indeed they regard it as one of the chief supports of the meeting, especially in the smaller village and rural churches. One of the favorite arguments for women's speaking is, that many churches could not maintain a social meeting without it; it is an absolute necessity of the work.

This plea is not wholly false. Churches have often been organized where there were not enough men to maintain a church on New Testament principles, and where, instead of a church organization, there should be nought but a voluntary assembly of

worshiping disciples. But one wrong cannot justify another. We can not argue woman's right to speak in church meetings from the premature organization of a church. The Christian way is to judge of the time to organize by the ability to maintain a church in accordance with the laws of God. But even where the church is established, it should always be a fundamental principle of Christian loyalty, never under any circumstances to think of disobedience to the will of Christ as a possible alternative. Disobedience is always of the devil, and always deadly to the interests of Christianity. No good end was ever gained by it, and it is always immeasurably better for the cause of true religion that a church be disbanded, than that it be maintained by disobedience to any divine command.

On the other hand, disobedience is just the thing that makes it impossible for churches to maintain themselves and their meetings. The speaking of women in church meetings is unquestionably one of the prime causes why Christian *men* are often less faithful than they ought to be; and one of the great causes why churches generally have so small a proportion of men in their membership. Let us notice the tendencies of the practice relative

(1) To the *attendance and interest of men in church meetings*. We must suppose that God has distributed the duties and responsibilities of the church and of its meetings in such a way as to ensure the very best results to each and every person

attending, to the meeting itself, and to the church. The best results of the social meeting, in particular, will be attained, for all interests and persons concerned, if, in obedience to the divine law, women are silent and men do all the speaking. This must be so because it is God's way, and God's way is always the best way, the way of the largest blessing and of the highest efficiency.

In other words, the divine *adaptations of the meeting* are such that, when men speak and women are silent, *everybody has the highest and most potent practical inducements to faithfulness in attendance; the strongest possible incentives to continued activity and zeal*; and the most effectual guarantee that the Holy Spirit, the source of all interest and all blessing, will always be present in power. That is to say, God has so constituted men and women, and brought them into such a relation to the church meeting, that man's best contribution to the meeting and his best gain from it is by speaking; while women both give and gain the most by silence. The best results all around are to be obtained when the *exclusive responsibility* for the conduct of the meeting rests with men.

But if this is so, what will be the effect of a division of this exclusive responsibility ?

Responsibility means interest. An exclusive responsibility means the highest attainable degree of interest. A divided responsibility means a divided and attenuated interest.

Now, while it is to a certain extent true that Christian men ought to be faithful to the church meeting under all circumstances, it is also true that God has given to men a predominantly rational nature, by virtue of which we need somehow to *realize* the claims and benefits of a particular line of action. Our continued interest is conditional upon our realization of the practical relations of the work to our own wills and to results. Men's Christian service is *rational* in a peculiar and distinctive sense. Women are characterized by a predominance of the affections, and their interest in any good work springs more directly out of the heart. Men have more need of what may be called moral compulsion, which consists, not in the logical constraints of a process of reasoning, or in physical necessity; but in an *imperative* call of duty. It is right that this should be so. It is so by divine ordinance—by the constitution of human nature. Such moral compulsion God has placed upon men by making them exclusively responsible for the conduct of church meetings, as well as for all government, and for all that appertains distinctively to headship. And we must suppose that the degree of the constraint—the strength of the appeal to man's interest, and to the totality of his nature—has been measured with the perfect precision of every divine work, there being nothing of superfluity or of deficiency, but everything being exactly adequate to the ideal result desired.

And so, when that exclusive responsibility is di-

vided, by giving women the half of it, it is natural and reasonable and necessary that the appeal of the meeting to man's convictions and interest should likewise be divided and so very greatly weakened. The unauthorized innovation destroys the fine balance and equipoise of motives by which God has provided for the ideal results of Christian work, and abates perceptibly from those particular motives by which God has attached men to the church and to its various activities. And so it comes to pass that it can no longer be easy and natural for Christian men to maintain a normal interest in the church meeting. It becomes a constant struggle against nature, with the inevitable result of all such struggles—a gradual defeat; the development of an irresistible tendency to neglect and unfaithfulness. It is not possible that a community of any extent should long withstand the natural tendencies of its own principles and practices.

We may not suppose that Christian men are conscious of this tendency to lose interest in the church meeting. It may not, indeed, be noticeable; it may not mark any perceptible weakening of interest relative to past experiences, but only with reference to a divine standard of which they are ignorant. It is not the result of a process of reasoning, but only of the intuitive movements of that rational nature which is below consciousness and independent of our voluntary judgments. It is our nature's unconscious and spontaneous response according to its own laws, to an

external state of things. If the external state of things were normal, the resulting tendency would be to a normal interest in the meeting. But since the external state of things is abnormal; since it consists of a broken segment of man's normal responsibility: the tendency must needs be to a diminished interest. Not because men wish it, but because from the nature of the case they can not help it. Though theoretically they still acknowledge their duty to the church meeting, practically the duty will have lost much of its life and power. The door has been thrown wide open for the ingress of indifference and neglect, and for spiritual inertness.

We do not need to *prove* that the facts correspond to this reasoning. The reasoning is unanswerable, and the facts are admitted. It is notorious that there is among Christian men a widespread tendency to neglect the social-religious meetings of the church. It is, as we have seen, one of those facts that the advocates of women's speaking make much of in their efforts to justify the practice. But it does not favor the practice. On the contrary, it is one of the legitimate fruits of it. The unfaithfulness of men is a consequence of the sin of women's supplanting men in the church meeting.

And is it not self-evident that those who argue woman's right to speak from men's neglect, are planning to enable the meeting to *get along without the men, and so to make the neglect*

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perpetual? The only practicable method of meeting and remedying the defection of Christian men from their duty to the church meeting, is to lay upon them the responsibility that God has laid upon them; namely, the exclusive responsibility for conducting it.

Women, on the other hand, never have exhibited a lack of interest in the church meeting when their voices were silent. From the beginning of Christian history till the present century the rule has been that they had no part in public speaking; but we are not aware that the complaint ever has been made that the interest of women in the church and in church meetings has flagged. On the contrary, their faithfulness and unvarying devotion have always been proverbial. The lesson of history is very plain that *Christian women do not need to participate in church meetings*, either for the maintenance of their own spiritual vitality, or for the promotion of their usefulness.

It is noteworthy, also, that women's independence of the church meeting is signified in a remarkable manner, even since they have come to speak most freely in it; for it is since then that all their numerous *voluntary* societies for religious work have had their origin.

(2) Women's speaking tends to the demoralization of the social church meeting by *causing it to drift away from the scriptural idea and methods*.

The speaking of women is itself an infraction

of the divine idea and methods of the meeting. The meeting is ideally masculine in type. In all its adaptations and active functions it belongs to headship. This is why women are forbidden to speak—because they are not of the head, but are subject. The church meeting is the masculine type of meeting, as the voluntary is the feminine. The free admission of women's speaking at once changes the church meeting so that it approximates the feminine type, and no longer represents the dominance of manhood in the sex relation.

We think it very doubtful if one layman out of an average hundred, or one preacher in ten, can give the true scriptural conception of the social church meeting. And the reason for this deplorable state of things, while it is no doubt various—while it arises partly in a lack of reflection, in a false nomenclature, and in a wrong usage—is due, more than to any other one cause, to the fact that the speaking of women has closed our manual of instruction, so that it is no longer available as a guidebook on this particular subject.

The only place in the New Testament where the idea and methods of the social church meeting are distinctly declared is in the fourteenth chapter of I Corinthians. But this is the chapter where women are bidden to be silent—an extremely uncomfortable chapter for the advocates of women's speaking, and one which they will in general consult only for the purpose of explaining it away. People are ever

reluctant to face the judgment of God upon their own sins. And those who favor women's speaking will not very often find—are not often in such a frame of mind that they are willing to find—in this chapter the true norm and standard of the modern church meeting. But this is precisely what it is; and in that women's speaking diverts attention from this fact, and causes us to ignore and forget the principles here enunciated that should determine the nature and methods of the meeting, it is demoralizing in its influence.

The true *idea* of the social church meeting is *edification*, or the spiritual instruction, or building up, of the church by means of prophesying. "Let all things be done unto edifying" (I Cor., xiv: 26). "Seek that ye may abound unto the edifying of the church" (vs. 12). "In the church I had rather speak five words with my understanding, that I might instruct others also, than ten thousand words in a tongue" (vs. 19). "Desire earnestly spiritual gifts, but rather [especially] that ye may prophesy" (vs. 1, 39). "He that prophesieth edifieth the church" (vs. 4), etc.

But unless we have greatly misconceived the popular idea and prevalent methods, the modern meeting is primarily *devotional*. The thought is that we gather to commune with God and with one another. Accordingly the meeting has acquired the name of *prayer-meeting*, and a large proportion of the time is devoted to prayer.

The difference in these conceptions is that which theologians recognize between rationalism and mysticism, between a religion that is fundamentally *thought*, and one that is fundamentally *feeling*. The New Testament idea of the social meeting appeals to the intellect of the disciple; the modern idea, to the heart. Edification proceeds by the apprehension of gospel truth, and it is promoted in the social meeting by prophesying, or the proclamation of gospel truth. It is distinctively a *rational* or *masculine*, conception. Communion with Christ, on the other hand, tends directly and immediately, not to the communication of religious knowledge, but to the enlivening of the spiritual *sensibilities*, the quickening of the emotional and affectional nature, the stimulating of faith, hope, love. It is a distinctively *feminine* conception.

Thus, however it may have come to pass, it is evident that the scriptural idea of the social church meeting has largely been supplanted. The meetings are now not generally conducted with a view to the communication of thought, but for the excitation of feeling; not so much with a view to knowing Christ better, as that our religious affections, our love for him, may be enkindled anew. The scriptural and masculine type has given way to an unscriptural and feminine type.

We believe this change is largely due to a felt necessity for adapting the meeting to the needs and natures of the female element among the worship-

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pers. Women's speaking, also, will naturally follow womanly methods—will naturally conform to a feminine type. So the forbidden practice results, must result, has resulted, in a serious perversion of the idea of the church meeting.

The same is true of the *methods* of the meeting. The methods naturally conform to the idea.

The scriptural meeting is conducted chiefly by means of prophesying. But prophesying is not giving a dry and soulless lecture or sermon on some religious theme. It is not theorizing about religion. It is declaring what one *knows* about it—what God has revealed to us by his Spirit, so that it has become a part of our experience, and so that we can testify to it with conviction, and with the assurance that God himself will bear witness with us to his own truth. It is the pouring out of the Spirit that enables the disciple to prophesy.

The social meeting, however, while its aim is always to teach, and to build up the members in the knowledge of the gospel, is characterized by the largest freedom as to method. There are no cut and dried forms to be observed. Any speaking gift whatever that may serve to instruct is in order. One may offer a prayer (I Cor., xiv: 14, 15); another may sing a psalm or hymn (vs. 15, 26); another may even speak the gospel in an unknown tongue, as they did on the day of Pentecost, and as some did in the Corinthian church (vs. 26), provided only it were interpreted so as to be understood (vs. 13,

19, 27); and the utterance of thanksgiving for blessings received (vs. 16), as well as the statement of a doctrine, or the announcement of some new views of truth (vs. 6, 26)—anything that one's experience or study of the gospel may have given him, he may bring in for the good of the church. Any male member may speak (vs. 23, 24, 26, 31), and he may say what he pleases, it being understood that what has benefited one will help others. The speaking is not arranged for and a fixed program provided, but there is opportunity for individuals to speak under an unforeseen impulse of the Spirit (vs. 30); and all seem to have spoken without prearrangement, by way of volunteer offerings.

Evidently, then, the specific character of each meeting would depend on the currents of thought and feeling prevalent in the church. We may suppose that, on occasion, as when Peter was in prison (Acts, xii: 5), the meeting will become wholly a true prayer-meeting. Ordinarily there will be some preparation, on the part of individuals at least, and we may suppose also on the part of the church. "When ye come together, each one *hath*" something prepared and ready to offer (vs. 26).

The idea of the social meeting is to utilize all the knowledge, experience, study, and gifts of every one of the male membership of the church for the spiritual upbuilding of all; and for the accomplishment of this end the largest possible freedom is guaranteed, and every form and shade of religious testi-

mony is assigned a place, in so much that even the most ignorant and the slowest of speech may contribute something as real and as valuable as his own knowledge of Christ to the edifying of the church.

But there is no true edifying but by the communication of truth, by teaching. The primary aim of the meeting, the mainspring of all genuine and lasting success, is in prophesying—in speaking for God in the proclamation of the gospel. We may meet for the cultivation of the religious affections; we may enkindle devotion to the uttermost and maintain at a high degree of fervor the faith, hope, love of our hearts;—it will not avail to the real edifying of the church unless at the same time the truths of the gospel are being proclaimed and learned by the members. It is by the apprehension of truth that we grow. Without it there is no real and substantial growth. We may by excitation of the emotions have some very interesting and apparently profitable meetings. A current of electricity may give to a dead body motions resembling life. But the only real Christian life is that which comes of filling the soul with the meat and drink of the Word (Jn., xvii: 17). And that which sanctifies is also that which is calculated to convict and save sinners (James, i: 18), as they may chance to be present (I Cor., xiv: 24, 25).

But there is a very decided tendency in these times to turn away from the method by prophesying or teaching, to prayer, to worship, and even to

those methods of mechanical manipulation by which the sensibilities are stirred, the emotions wrought upon. Especially have we noted the tendency to multiply the number of participants, after the methods of the young people's societies, thirty, forty, or fifty persons sometimes speaking in the course of a half hour. Such meetings are stimulating, but not nourishing. Ideas follow each other too rapidly to admit of their making much impression upon the mind. There is a vivid play of feeling; an animated show of interest; but very little real instruction. Such methods may have their utility and their place. The use made of them by the young people may be eminently wise and beneficent. We are not prepared to say. But for the church meeting they are vicious in the extreme, as well as unscriptural. The apostolic rule is that there may be from four to six leading speakers (I Cor., xiv: 27-30). And is it not evident that, if room is made for the reading of Scripture, prayers, and hymns, this is as many as can speak to advantage? It takes several minutes for one to deliver any real message—to bring out a real, practical, spiritual thought; and half a dozen such thoughts are as many as can be digested on a single occasion. Why else should the Holy Spirit have prescribed that limit to the number of participants?

The fault to which we advert in the methods of church meetings is plainly a falling away from the rational, or teaching, methods of the apostles.

Prophesying, or the proclamation of truth out of the fulness of a living experience and by the illumination of the Spirit, gives way to methods that do not aim primarily at instruction, but at devotion. The stirring of the religious emotions becomes a leading aim. The methods are drifting thus from a masculine to a feminine type—a natural result of introducing a large feminine element among those who employ methods which were designed and adapted exclusively for use by men.

Women's speaking in church meetings is thus shown to be responsible for diminishing the hold of the meetings upon the interest and attendance of men, and for perverting the idea and methods of the meeting from a masculine to a feminine type. In other words, the tendency of the practice is to the emasculation of the church meeting as to its essential nature, and as to attendance.

5. Women's speaking in church meetings is mischievous in that it *sets the church in active antagonism to the will of God and to all who accept God's will as law*. The eternal antagonism between good and evil, right and wrong, truth and falsehood, is not more distinctly emphasized anywhere than in the attitude of those who favor this practice toward those who do and teach the commandment of Christ upon the subject. This is best illustrated by the experience of those ministers who denounce the practice as disobedience and sin. We remember a striking instance that occurred not far from twenty

years ago in a western state. We give it somewhat in detail.

A young man, liberally educated and recently graduated from a well-known theological seminary, and fully in sympathy with the old gospel and with the distinctive doctrines of his church, felt himself called to labor in the West. He went prepared to do missionary service; to go into unoccupied territory, or to the weakest churches, and to renounce the help of missionary societies and to trust for a living to the blessing of God on his work.

In the course of his past experience his attention had been directed to the disparity between the sexes in the membership of the churches, and he had been impressed with the comparative impotence and fruitlessness of labors looking toward the salvation of men. His earliest western observations brought the subject up afresh, and convinced him that there is a disease somewhere in the religious life of the age; a disorder paralyzing the power of the church in certain directions; a derangement presumably in the relations of the sexes to the work. He thought it his duty, therefore, as a servant of Christ and physician of souls, to analyze the trouble and expose the causes. His diagnosis led to the adoption of views substantially identical with those announced in the preceding chapters of this volume. And thereupon the same motives that led him to the investigation impelled him to declare the results in two consecutive sermons.

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After that, his engagement as a supply having terminated, he sought for a settlement in accordance with his plans. He sought far and near most diligently, but in vain. At last, after preaching a month or six weeks for a church that knew nothing of his "peculiar views," he received a call, and a council met. The pastor of one of the leading churches introduced the moot subject, the candidate took strong ground, ordination was refused. Then the young man turned to other fields. After a little he applied to the national societies, in turn, seeking an appointment as a colporteur, home missionary, foreign missionary. Having been favorably noticed to the foreign society, he was summoned to headquarters for an appointment. But meantime, local agents having reported him to be "riding a hobby," the summons was countermanded. All this time he was in possession of assurances that if he would abandon his "unpractical views" he would be helped. It was not now a question whether he would preach them or not. He had for some time been convinced that that was useless, and had given it up. The question was whether he would renounce the will and word of Christ for the sake of the favor of the denomination—whether he would sell his Lord for a living. He thought not, and turned to other pursuits.

Some years later, however, his heart again turned to the ministry and once more he sought ordination. A new generation of preachers had brought new

light, and he was ordained, on the same ground where he had before been rejected, by a large and representative council in one of the first cities of the Union. But the council included in its resolution a censure of his views on the woman question, and published the same in one of the leading denominational weeklies. The result was that when again he sought among the weak and perishing churches for an opportunity to preach, he sought in vain. The churches would die rather than give such a man a chance to help them, with no stipulation at all as to salary. At last he gave up the quest, convinced that God was calling him to another work.

Now if we admit that this young man was rather more dogmatic and emphatic than the law requires in his deliverances on the subject; if we concede that he was not willing to give the devil anything less than a knock-down blow; and if we grant that a little more worldly wisdom would have enabled him to avoid the rocks and weather the storms, and to sail peacefully on to a life of usefulness in his chosen vocation—what does it argue? An excess of zeal in a good cause is not generally considered a serious fault. We give it our blessing with the confident assurance that time will round the corners off and tone down the surplus of spirits. But the trouble with this young man was, not in an over-zealous dogmatism, but in his unflinching determination *not to deny* a doctrine of God's Word

to which the churches were opposed. If his most emphatic utterances and all his utterances had been on the other side of the question, there never would have been a thought as to his being a crank or a hobby-rider. It was not for the quantity or quality of his deliverances, but because of the *direction of his opinions*, that he was rejected. He would not allow the denomination to do his religious thinking for him. He would not, because others did, accept a lie as truth, and prostitute his intelligence to the invention of defenses for it. What he believed the Word of God to teach, he accepted and taught; and he denounced as false whatever seemed to him to be against the teaching of the Word, including the practice in question.

We do not wonder that the advocates of women's speaking were opposed to this young man. It could not be otherwise. Truth and falsehood are ever at war with each other. But it will be well for the churches who rejected this servant of Christ to look their action squarely in the face. It was as clear a case of persecution for righteousness' sake as the annals of Christianity can show. But the churches are now the persecutors, and not the persecuted. Infinitely better were it for them to have been out-cast for Christ's sake. The young man rejected can "rejoice and be exceeding glad" in that he has kept his integrity, and that he has the approval of God. But those who rejected him have to just that extent rejected Christ (Matt., xxv: 40). And

what was this rejection? Not merely the action of the council that declined to recommend ordination. It is the practice of the churches and of their individual members, and the holding and expression of opinions by individuals—everything that goes to create a public sentiment favorable to women's speaking and against the doctrine of the Word. It is this public sentiment in which every one has a part who favors or upholds women's speaking, that has made it impossible for that young man, even after being ordained, to find a field of Christian service.

"It is shameful for a woman to speak in the church"—shameful for the church. And is it not a shame that there are certain practical precepts of Christianity that a minister can *believe in* only at his peril? Is it not a shame that the churches of Christ will not listen to the whole will of their Master, or even tolerate those who stedfastly proclaim it?

6. Women's speaking in the church tends to the *subversion of Christian faith*.

There is a constant and close connection between action and feeling. As we act toward any person or thing, so we surely come to feel toward them. If we wrong a person, we hate him; if we do good to him, we love him. If we treat people or objects with contemptuous disregard, we naturally come to feel contempt for them; but if our conduct is respectful, even if it be not from the heart, the tend-

ency will be toward our really coming to experience the respect we express.

So some one has proposed a wise and practical argument for treating the Bible respectfully. That is, for handling and treating the book itself—the combination of paper, ink, and leather we hold in our hands—with veneration; not putting it to common uses, as making it a seat for the baby or a block to hold the door open—the idea being to cultivate reverence for Him who speaks to us therein, and for the expression of his holy will which he thus deigns to give us.

Precisely so our treatment of the commandments of the Lord has a controlling influence upon our feelings toward God and toward his Word. Disobedience is an expression of contempt, and it can not well consist with any real love for God, or with any real faith in him. We can not really believe in the deity of one whom we lightly disobey; or in the divine authorship of the Book whose precepts have for us no greater weight than our own opinions.

Accordingly, we find among those who advocate women's speaking in the church a very general tendency to discredit the divine authority of the apostolic prohibition, though the apostle distinctly asserts that his words are the "commandment of the Lord" (I Cor., xiv: 37); and if these words are not inspired it will be difficult to prove that any of Paul's writings are. But reason is not in the

question. Disobedience tends to skepticism, perforce of nature's law. The skepticism seeks to disguise itself by distinguishing between the authority of Christ and that of Paul; but it is apparently forgotten that the Master wrote nothing but by the hands of his apostles, and that to reject their words is to reject Him. The doubt is a doubt of God—a doubt, first, as to this particular command being from God; secondly, as to the apostle Paul being an inspired teacher; and, thirdly, as to the divine origin of the New Testament. The last follows inevitably from the first. If God did not inspire the apostolic prohibition, then the New Testament is not the book of God. Or, at least, it is the manual of faith and practice for a past generation, while today it is antiquated and obsolete.

Such is the obscuration of faith that a careful observer must discover to be taking place in the religious life of the age—not, indeed, of all disciples; but of a great and growing number of those who bear the Christian name. It is a legitimate fruit of those irrational methods of interpretation with which the advocates of the practice in question have laid violent hands upon, and taught the people to condemn, a "commandment of the Lord." By disobedience they are frittering away their faith in God and in the Bible, till the words of inspiration become to them no more than the utterances of a mere man, and till the light of a heavenly reve-

lation vanishes before the self-sufficiency of human reason.

NOTE.—The truth of the above paragraph is illustrated by the following quotations: In the Homiletic Monthly for December, 1887, (as quoted in the "Standard," Chicago, for November 29, 1888, by Rev. A. W. Lamar), Miss Francis E. Willard says, "Christ, not Paul, is the source of all churchly authority and power." In her little book on "Woman's Wrongs," Gail Hamilton writes (p. 186), "Paul * * * sometimes showed in his teachings the influence of his age. Christ shone, mildly to meet our darkened eyes, above all ages. Paul could never quite get out of his mind the notion of woman's sphere. Into the mind of Christ it never came."

In thus discarding the authority of the apostle Paul, the advocates of women's speaking in the church testify to their understanding of the apostolic mandates. *If they do not think he forbids their practice, and forbids it now as in the past, why do they reject his authority?* There can be no reason. It is because they *know* that the prohibitory texts are against their practice that they antagonize them. They *know* that they are waging war against what is written. Otherwise they would explain, and not renounce, the writing. The renunciation marks the consciousness of failure to explain.

7. Women's speaking in the church tends to the *loss of moral earnestness* and to the *decay of moral and spiritual power*.

Moral earnestness consists in giving to moral and spiritual truth a controlling authority and power over our lives. Power, moral and spiritual, has two elements, a divine and a human, the latter being the manward condition and vehicle of the former. The divine element of power is in the presence and blessing of God the Holy Spirit. (Lk., xxiv: 49; Acts, i: 8); the human element is in moral earnestness, or in making the will of God as revealed in the Word the dominant principle of our lives.

We may be sure that these two elements are never disjoined. Whatever else they may have, the disobedient, or those who think more of their own will and judgment than of the will and wisdom of God, never can have the fulness of the Spirit of God with them—never can have true power. The prediction, “I will *pour out* my Spirit upon all flesh” (Joel, ii: 28), never will be fulfilled in anything even remotely approaching the power of Pentecost till all flesh shall give supreme homage to the wisdom of God as it finds expression in the written Word.

So our Savior says, “If a man love me, he will *keep my word*: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him” (Jn., xiv: 23); and “He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me: and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will *manifest myself unto him*” (vs. 21). Obedience opens the door, and the Spirit of God comes in and manifests his glory.

Such being the condition of the possession of power, it is self-evident that a disobedient church can not have it unless God shall deny himself. We should expect the attitude of the churches of this day toward the subject of women’s speaking in the church, and toward the commandments of Christ relative thereto, to result in a gradual paralysis of Christian effort and in a growing dearth

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of piety and its fruits. No longer, as in primitive times, will the blessing of God give great fruitage to little effort; but efforts and machinery will multiply, and no corresponding blessing be realized. The results of Christian work will be less symmetrical and less satisfactory; new difficulties and problems will arise; and there will be a growing dissipation and diversion of energy, with a decline of devotion and of regard for the essence of godliness. The repudiation of the will of Christ in all the prayer-meetings of the land is adequate cause of such demoralization. Do we find the facts corresponding to such anticipations?

It would be impossible to speak definitely of the lowering of the standard of requirements for admission to the church. Is it not true that in great numbers of churches there are really no terms of admission whatever other than a decently moral life? Who does not know of instances where even a decent morality is not required? What proportion of the converts nowadays give any real experience to the church? What proportion of evangelical churches *insist* upon any experience? And how large a proportion of them maintain, or pretend to maintain, the discipline, not of the New Testament, but even of the churches of a half century ago? We think that any person who is competent to judge, that is, any truly regenerate person, will agree with us that there is a general falling away in these respects, and a steady growth of worldliness in the

churches. Religion and morality are, for the multitudes, coming to be more and more nearly convertible terms.

But let us notice some of the *symptoms* of this decline.

The dancing, card-playing, and theater-going Christianity of the day is a symptom. Self-indulgence and self-pleasing, irrespective of the consequences to the unconverted, to the church, or to their own spirituality—who shall deny its prevalence? And what proportion of the churches maintain a standard against it?

The mania for joking and jollity in connection with religious enterprises of all sorts, is a symptom of more significance than may at first appear. Preachers joke in the pulpit, in the social meeting, in ministers' conferences, everywhere. The brethren joke in church meetings, in social church unions, and wherever they meet for religious work. But when men are in earnest they do not often joke. If men were in earnest in the Master's work they would find social inspiration in solid Christian thinking and planning, and we think they would find a wholesome disgust toward any brother who should endeavor to give a humorous cast to his remarks. The salvation of souls was not a humorous business to Christ, or to Paul; and it ought not be regarded as such by us. The tendency to frivolity and humor is an indication

of the decline of moral earnestness and of the lack of the power of the Holy Spirit in pulpits and pews.

The decay of moral earnestness and power is manifest in the indifference of Christians to the great moral questions of the day, as the observance of the Christian Sabbath. We all remember the history of the Columbian Exposition. There was a great furor of preaching and passing resolutions expressive of indignation at the idea of opening the gates on Sunday, and something was done. But the gates were opened and the "American Sabbath" dishonored. Does anybody suppose this could or would have been done if the management of the Exposition had not known that they could count on the practical indifference of the Christian public? They knew that Christian men generally carry their energy and determination into their secular business rather than into religion; that most of the talk about Sunday closing was pious froth; and that if they quietly opened the gates that would be the end of it, and they would probably get a fair share of nominally Christian patronage on the Lord's day. Were they mistaken?

The Sunday newspaper—that training school in Sabbath desecration and immorality for the newsboys and for the general public—has come into being and grown great, and is daily growing greater, flourishing upon the moral inertness and active patronage of Christian men.

The liquor traffic, dragging its tens of thousands

down to temporal and eternal death every year, and filling the land with poverty and shame and crime, appeals to the average Christian's conscience less strongly than do questions of national finance or party politics. But if Christians were half alive, they would realize that the fight with the liquor power is incomparably the most important social issue before the American people; and they would feel themselves to be under bonds to God and to humanity to find some way of putting a speedy period to the career of this hydra-headed monster, and thus to close one at least of the many wide-open gates to hell.

The trouble with the Christianity of the day is that it has trifled with the will of God till it has lost in a great measure its appreciation of moral truth. Christians have disregarded the requirements of the Word of God, of duty, of conscience, till they have all but ceased to feel the force of God's claims upon them, and until that power of conviction and loyalty to truth which makes men heroes in a right cause has given way to a time-serving expediency and a self-indulgent worldliness. Disobedience has subverted moral earnestness and banished the Holy Spirit—eating out like a gangrene the life and power of the church, till her denunciations of sin become like a sounding brass and a clanging cymbal, and till her efforts to rid herself of it become little more than the exhibition of her own impotence.

8. Women's speaking tends to the *emasculatation of the church as to its membership.*

The power of the church to maintain its membership lies in its ability to win outsiders. We suppose that in a normal state of things the sexes would be saved in approximately equal numbers. Our present aim, however, is simply to show that the practice in question furnishes a reasonable and adequate explanation of the existing disparity. It will not probably be questioned that there are at present in the membership of the leading evangelical churches in this country about two women to one man—only one-third of the whole number being males.*

Since women's speaking is forbidden, it is an abnormal, unnatural practice, and therefore a constant drawback to the normal development of the church meeting and of the work of the church. Because it is not right, its tendency is not right, but is obstructive, detrimental, demoralizing. It must be so by a necessity of natural law, and irrespective of our ability to observe and estimate its tendencies. With respect to the effect of these obstructive tendencies upon unregenerate men, and upon the building up of the male membership of the church, we observe,

(1) There must necessarily be developed *an ab-*

* See Statistics in N. Y. Independent for January 31, '95, by W. H. Roberts, D.D., LL.D., Stated Clerk of Presbyterian General Assembly.

normal repulsion of worldly men from the church.

We may suppose that there is always more or less of repulsion—a *normal* repulsion on account of sin. This practice gives rise to something more—to an abnormal repulsion.

Women's speaking is forbidden because it is against womanly subjection—because it involves a dominance of women and therefore a subjection of men. But this subversion of the sex relation operates differently on the two sexes. The unwomanly act directly affects no woman but the one who speaks. She violates only her own womanhood, not that of other women. A woman may be a member of the church and honor the law of God and the place to which God has called her in the marriage relation, even though all other women do otherwise. And, as a matter of fact, there are comparatively few, out of the whole number of Christian women, who do actually speak in church meetings. Most of them observe the normal order. The church meeting, therefore, has no direct and personal insult to the womanhood of the women present; no chill of repulsion to dampen the fervor of those who are disposed to do right. For them the church meeting is right because they are right.

With men the case is different. Whenever a woman speaks, and though there be but one of all the women in the church that does speak, *every man* in the membership of the church who is present *is subjected* to that one. She speaks to the

church, and the unnatural subjection of all the men in the church is as effectually accomplished by the speaking of one woman as though all the women spoke. Wherever women speak at all, therefore, there is the insult to manhood, always existing though unrecognized, and always exerting a silent but potent influence upon all men, deadening their interest and positively repelling them from the place of their humiliation. It is impossible that this should not be so. It is manhood's unconscious protest against effeminacy.

(2) The emasculation of the social church meeting in idea, methods, and attendance, to which we have already adverted, impairs the efficiency of the church in its work for the salvation of men. The social meeting is the great practical evangelizing agency of the church. There the repentant express their desires and announce their decisions; there they are received and enlisted in the work. But unconverted men will not resort, and especially not to religious meetings, where they will be conspicuous through the absence of men. The ordinary meetings of most of the churches have thus very little power to touch that great multitude of unbelieving men who surround them everywhere. And they are not touched. The churches gather in the women and children, and but very few men.

There is need of a new infusion of masculinity, and of the power and grace of God into the churches. It is not the gospel, but the church, that

is emasculated. A return to obedience and to divine methods will surely give us back the Spirit—the almighty Power of Pentecost. And that is a power as able to conquer the resistance of men as that of women. Let us not deceive ourselves; men have no more power to resist God to-day than they had in the beginning. Sin was sin then, as it is now. It is not because men are hardened against the Word of God, but because the church has abandoned the Word, that men are not converted and saved.

(3) The illogical and irrational treatment of Scripture involved in explaining away the prohibition of women's speaking in the church, is calculated to disgust intelligent and thinking men outside the church, and to convince them that the honesty and consistency of Christian leaders and teachers is a very doubtful quantity. The world knows it when the church disregards the commandments of Christ; knows the weakness of its pleas in self-justification. It is on the watch for the sins of Christians, and it turns them to account. It has reason to do so. And woe to the church when it gives occasion of offense.

Worldly men often assert, as a wholesale objection to Christianity, that "you can prove anything you choose out of the Bible." And they are right, if the logic of women's speaking in the church is true. If we are at liberty to reverse a divine law by the fabrication of a mere unauthorized hypoth-

esis, then we can believe and practice what we please, irrespective of the letter of Scripture teaching. We can manipulate the Word to make it suit our own notions of order and propriety. We cannot blame people for being skeptical when ministers of Christ so far forget their high responsibility as to lend the influence of their holy office to the promulgation of such unreason.

9. Women's speaking in the church is an embodiment of the idea of "equality," which is a subversion of the true sex relation and thus of the divine order of the *family*. Woman's place in marriage is one of subjection. But the apostle declares that speaking in the church is inconsistent with subjection. It is an expression of equality in the sense in which women are not equal with men; i. e., in the exercise of dominance or authority. This practice therefore tends to the equalization of the authority of the sexes in all the relations of life. We have traced this tendency in some ecclesiastical, social, and civil relations. Let us observe some of its effects upon the domestic relations—upon home life.

The difference between the acknowledgment of subjection and the assertion of equality, in the administration of domestic affairs, is the difference between a true wife and one that is not true. The latter renounces her fundamental obligations, and is not properly a wife at all. An independent manager is not a subject helper, and does not take the

place of one. The disposition and spirit of the two are totally different; as different as self-assertion and dictation are different from submission. And the difference in spirit and disposition inevitably expresses itself in thoughts, words, actions. Instead of a wife, entering with cordial helpfulness into the work and plans of a husband, we have thus a woman with self-asserting opinions and plans of her own. The husband finds that, instead of a counsellor whose advice he may use to his advantage, he has a will to contend with that acknowledges no right of control on his part, and that claims a prerogative of direction and control in all the details of domestic life as large as his own. She has as good a right to hold and to assert her opinions against her husband, as he has to maintain his own; and as good a right to act independently as he has. She is as much master of herself as he is of himself, and may act accordingly. Such is the modern doctrine of equality, of which the church has planted and nourished the germinal principle in the practice under discussion.

Of course such a doctrine trains women to be dissatisfied and discontented with their womanhood. It tells them they are wronged and insulted by the divine law of subjection, and begets irritation and resentment against men on account of such imaginary wrongs. So it introduces a spirit of distrust and alienation between the sexes on account of their original and essential differences. Precisely so

Satan's first step in dragging the race into sin was to create in the hearts of Adam and Eve a distrust and resentment against God because of a restraint his wisdom had prescribed, and which, if they had but known it, was for their happiness.

Assuming now man's headship and authority, as created and defined by God; woman's sphere and duty of subjection; and the modern revolt against these doctrines, with the consequent alienation and irritation—it is self-evident what the practical outcome must be. If men were to act with perfect justice, wisdom, and goodness, yet without an unmanly renunciation of their authority; woman's claim to an equal authority must result in differences of opinion which can not be settled; in controversies, dissensions, separations. This does not necessarily mean outbreking quarrels and bickerings, but simply that there is no legitimate method of settlement of such differences but by the submission of the wife; and, that being ruled out, there is no method but separation.

It is unquestionably true, however, that the natural tendency of such a state of things is toward bickerings and strife, and toward the kindling of passions whose legitimate end is violence, divorces, murders. And it is true that, just as we descend in the scale of being toward the animalized and vicious classes of humanity, this tendency will gather power, and the outbreking criminality resulting therefrom will be multiplied. Such, in its grosser aspects, is the

“woman’s rights” or equality doctrine. Such the essential principle of women’s speaking in the church. In its outward seeming an innocent deviation from the divine precept—rather the unsolicited offering of love than the triumph of a sinful impulse—it proves itself to be in reality of the essence of evil, a very scattering of firebrands and death. And it becomes a question of the gravest moment, and one which specially commends itself to those who think the church has progressed beyond the teachings of the Word of God, for how much of the rampant crime and immorality of the day the church is directly responsible by virtue of these selfsame progressive doctrines and practices. It is sad indeed, that the church, instead of shedding abroad the light and blessing of virtue, has become the source of pestilential influences that are largely responsible for the epidemic of marital infidelity and crime that stains our western civilization. That it is so, is as certain as the connection ever can be made to appear between moral causes and effects.

But the worst consequences of the equality doctrine are not the grossest. Divorces and murders are but outbreking symptoms, in the lower strata of society, of a disease that is poisoning the springs of all social and domestic life. Equality is a revolt against the divine law of subjection among the refined and Christian, as truly as among the brutalized and vicious classes. And it results in the same irreconcilable differences of opinion between hus-

bands and wives, which, though not expressed in blows and curses, are yet fatal to true confidence, love, and peace. The best of husbands can not love and honor a wife who refuses to do her duty. However self-denying and devoted he may be, and though it be the desire of his heart to spend and be spent for her sake; yet if she refuse him the honor due to a husband; if she pursue her own independent judgment irrespective of his wish and authority; if she be not voluntarily and honestly subject to him, as Christ commands her to be—he may grant her full liberty to pursue her course, and there may never be a bitter word between them; but his love for her and his respect for her womanhood will die. The bond of their unity is broken. She has broken it by her refusal to be a true wife.

If we may presume to estimate the relative badness of evils, where all are immeasurably bad, we should say that this consequence of the “woman’s rights” doctrine is the worst of all—that it is the destruction of marriage; the annihilation of the most sacred bond on earth. An independent woman is not a wife; and the assertion of woman’s independent equality of authority with the husband, is an assertion of that which will forever forbid her becoming a wife. It is a deadly sin against conjugal love; against the happiness and peace of the home.

Women’s speaking in social church meetings is a practice, which, because it is against the command-

ment of God, is essential anarchy. By its cultivation of ideas inconsistent with the subjection of woman, it tends to the subversion of the true sex relation, and so aims a blow at the divine order of marriage and of society. The sex relation is fundamental to all human institutions. When it is deranged everything is in disorder. So at the present time we see civil and ecclesiastical institutions going to pieces before the equality craze. It is anarchy of the worst and most dangerous sort, because it wears the guise of justice, reform, religion, and because the evils to which it gives rise are, as a rule, not immediate, physical, and patent to the senses, but spiritual and impalpable. It is as much more dangerous than the mad ravings of communism, as the influence of the polished and polite libertine is more dangerous than that of the bloated and besotted sensualist; as spiritual evil is more subtle and delusive than physical danger. It cometh not with observation. And when it is come it is possible for those who wish to do so to doubt the evil of it, and to attribute grosser evils that follow in its train to other causes.

CHAPTER IX.

CONCLUSION.

Some promiscuous practical thoughts will conclude our discussion.

1. The doctrine in its largest and general conception is, that women may prophesy; that they are as free as men to exercise all their powers of intellect and speech.

But it is as women that they are free. They are free subject to the law of their sex. They are not free to transgress their womanhood—not free to do an unwomanly act.

2. Unveiling in public assemblies and speaking in church meetings are forbidden to women because they are unwomanly, or "shameful," acts. Women ought to be ashamed to do them. If they are not, it is because shame has become second nature to them—because a wrong custom has perverted their understanding, their moral sense, their womanly instincts.

3. God *never* moves women to speak in the church. He forbids it; and God can not permit what he forbids. God can not contradict himself.

Our inward emotions and impulses are not a trustworthy index of duty. There will always be found

some all-sufficient inner spiritual sanction for any wrong act we have in any way come to believe we *ought* to do. The most diabolical deeds ever committed were done by people who thought they were following an inner impulse from God. Murder and lust are in all history the very frequent handmaids of that piety which follows the leading of the "inner light." Mysticism and fanaticism are synonyms of ill omen in all religions. The light we find within is the creature of our own mental judgments and habits of life. The Christian woman who really believes she ought to speak in the church will be sure to find an impulse within telling her to speak. She thinks it is the voice of God; but it is the voice of her own sinful, deceitful heart, and of the tempter who would lead her astray (Jer., xvii: 9; Prov., iii: 5; xxviii: 26).

It is for this reason—because our inner light is not trustworthy; because it reflects rather our own mind than the mind of God—that the Bible has been given for our guidance. The Bible is needed by us to correct the false beacons we find within our souls; and it was given for that very purpose. It is a fatal mistake, as well as a contemptuous disregard of God's law, to subordinate the plain letter of Bible teaching to these depraved creations of our own intellectual and emotional nature.

4. There are some Scripture precepts that we must regard as of transient obligation. Such, we suppose, are those enjoining foot-washing and the fraternal kiss. But these are to be regarded as now

obsolete, not because of any extra-scriptural assumption relative to the reasons of them, but because of certain distinct intimations within the page of Holy Writ itself. These intimations we may presume to have been regarded as conclusive by the great majority of Christians, since the practice is to that effect. But we are not called upon to discuss them in this place. The scope of every divine command is dependent upon the particular reasons assigned or suggested for each by the inspired text. Each has its own mission, its own limitations. We cannot argue from one to another. And if we were to do so, an obedient spirit would not argue that all the precepts are obsolete because two or three of them are; but rather that all are permanently in force because most of them are. But reason forbids us to indulge in such blind generalizing with respect to the truths of revelation.

5. The law of silence is easily reconciled with the demands of Christian evangelism. It gave rise to no apparent difficulties in the apostles' time. And to-day no body of Christians is characterized by greater adaptability to the exigencies of Christian work, or by a more aggressive spirit of evangelism, than are the Presbyterians. But they are what they are by reason of a process of development and growth in the past, in which, for the most part, the speaking of women in the church had no place. And there is no Christian people that show greater confidence, energy, and success

in evangelistic work, than do the white Baptists of the South. But as a rule their women are silent in the churches.

Surely there is a way to do the Lord's work without doing despite to the Lord's laws. We *can* do it if we *will*, and if we are willing to take a little trouble to discover available methods. The difficulties anticipated are imaginary bugbears, or at the most chained lions. The great, and only real, difficulty is in the disposition of those who favor the modern practice—the unwillingness of men to resume the burden of active responsibility which they have been wont to shirk upon the too-ready shoulders of women; and the unwillingness of women to forego a practice, that involves no real self-sacrifice or work, but of which usage has made them jealous as of a right.

We cannot undertake to indicate the methods of Christian evangelism that consist with the silence of women in the churches. The subject is too large for a paragraph. The possibilities as to method are numerous and varied. We would suggest the woman's prayer-meeting, or the young people's meeting, as available for the vocal expression of interest; and rising or raising the hand, or such other silent indication as the leader may ask for, in the church assembly. A meeting of the women of the church led by the pastor is certainly a possibility; and it certainly obviates the "necessity" of speaking in the church meeting. In the

hearing of experiences, a select committee, or the pastor and deacons, are more efficient than the church assembly; and there is no good reason why their recommendation should not determine the action of the church, without any further hearing of the candidate. But a Christian church, though it may at times be in doubt as to the best methods, ought never to entertain any method, as expedient or as possible, which involves disregarding a divine precept.

6. The *spirit and methods of thought* of the modern practice, relative to the Word of God, are *skeptical*. The fundamental assumption of the advocacy is, not that the Word "abideth," but that on this subject it is obsolete. There is no reason for this opinion. The testimony of the Word itself, and of all the critics, is against it. And every clear-headed thinker who asserts that the requirement of silence had reference to custom, knows that he is injecting a thought into the sacred text; and knows that his object in thus adding to what is written is to destroy the permanency of the command.

And why is it that so many nowadays are seeking to destroy the law of silence? Simply because in the profundity of their wisdom they have weighed the wisdom of God in the balances and have found it wanting. They say the divine law is antiquated, in spite of the fact that the divine reason of the law is permanent. In other words, the church, by

virtue of its experience in Christian work, has become wiser than its Lord—knows better than He does what methods are calculated to win success.

This is skepticism pure and simple. And it is a fact that the worst enemy Christianity ever had was never more defiant of the will of God; never more persistent in his refusal to acknowledge God and to observe his precepts, than are the advocates of this practice. And never was there a skeptic that did not have every whit as much reason for his rationalistic infidelity as they have for theirs.

The churches that follow this delusion are like the mariner who, knowing that steering by a certain star will bring his vessel by the shortest and safest route to port, ignores the star, and gives his craft over to the guidance of the winds. It is so much easier to run before the winds of custom than to steer undeviatingly true to the Word of God. But let us be sure that allowing ourselves to be borne by the winds away from the Star, is away from port; away from safety; away from everything for which we ought to strive, to an aimless drifting upon unknown seas to ultimate certain shipwreck.

7. Christian *women* have it in their power to settle this whole controversy, and honor their womanhood, by doing right and advocating the right.

8. The practical bearings of the subject relative to *men* are of the last importance.

We have seen that, while any woman may main-

tain her integrity by keeping silence in the church, even though all women speak; with men the case is different. So long as *any* woman speaks, *all* the men in the membership of the church are subjected to her by the Authority that convokes the assembly and imposes upon men the obligation of attendance. This subjection and humiliation of manhood is a necessary and universal concomitant of women's speaking in the church. It is for this reason that silence is enjoined (I Cor., xiv: 34).

This, then, is the situation:—The churches are at war with manhood. To become a church member a man must compromise his manhood, and be willing to take the part of a woman. And this, not once, or twice, but habitually and always, so long as he remains a church member. He must make it an essential element of his religious life to practice, and so to cultivate, effeminacy of thought, feeling, and action; and to put his manliness far from him forever, by subjecting himself to this custom. And every man, when considering his duty to his God and the salvation of his soul, is obliged to choose between his manhood and the church.

If such an alternative had been laid upon us by our God, our faith in God should lead us to believe that He who had humbled us would somehow lift us up and maintain our honor. But such is not the case. God has forbidden such a humbling of manhood. The command that women be silent is addressed directly, not to the women, but to the

church—to Christian *men* as managers of the church—and it requires them to maintain their manhood, as truly as it requires women to observe the law of their sex. The “shame” of women’s speaking in the church is more to men than to women, because men are responsible for it. That shame is the contempt God feels, and requires us to feel, for the men who, Esau-like, despise their birthright. No, God has not placed ignominy on manhood. It is the church itself, departing from God’s law, that has done this thing.

The practical effect of imposing such degradation upon manhood is as we have seen, to repel men from the church. If men realized the nature of the practice in question, and precisely where it puts them, we are satisfied there would be fewer men in the churches than there are to-day. But, whether they know it or not, this practice establishes a permanent *antagonism in nature* between manhood and the church, that must forever operate to the detriment of the church, and must virtually close the kingdom of heaven against the great majority of men in even the most religious communities—nay, *especially* in such communities.

9. What we need to-day for the success of Christianity, more than we need all things else, is the power of Pentecost—the outpouring of the Spirit of God, the manifestation of Christ.

And the way God has appointed for us to acquire that sum of all blessings, is by obedience

to the commandments He has given us in the written Word.

This then is our great need—obedience. God can not fail to perform his part, if we do ours. If we ply the key God has given us—if we obey—the doors of heaven will be opened; the overflowing blessing will descend.

But sitting in judgment upon the commandments, and explaining them away by considerations foreign to the Word and derived wholly from our own reason and experience, is not obedience. It is disobedience. It is exalting our own wisdom above the wisdom of God. Desiring to find reasons for *not doing*, rather than reasons for *doing*, the very thing commanded, is not the *spirit* of obedience, but the spirit of disobedience, which forfeits the blessing. Conformity of *heart and conduct* to the precise requirement of the precept, because of the infinite Wisdom that has given it, and whether or not it meets our views of expediency and propriety—submission to the uttermost to the behest of God, because he is God, and because we are but men—is the obedience that honors God, and that God will honor (I Sam., ii: 30; Prov., xxi: 30).

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